The Akali Movement

MOHINDER SINGH

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

THE AKALI MOVEMENT

Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The Akali Movement

Mohinder Singh

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PANJAB STUDIES
NEW DELHI

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

© Mohinder Singh, 1997

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission.

First published in India 1978 by
The Macmillan Company of India Limited

1997 Edition

Published by the National Institute of Panjab Studies, New Delhi and printed at Bhai Vir Singh Press, New Delhi-110 001

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

DEDICATED TO

DR GANDA SINGH

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

A Jatha of Akali volunteers marching to Guru-ka-Bagh on 25 October, 1922.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

I rejoice that I am being tried for a cause which the Sikhs have made their own. I was in jail when the Guru-ka-Bagh struggle was gallantly fought and won by the Sikhs. I marvelled at the courage and sacrifice of the Akalis and wished that I could be given an opportunity of showing my deep admiration of them by some form of service. That opportunity has now been given to me and I earnestly hope that I shall prove worthy of their high tradition and fine courage.

Sat Sri Akal

Jawaharlal Nehru

Central Jail 25 September 1923
Nabha

For full text see Appendix V in the book.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Preface

An abridged version of the author's doctoral thesis on the subject this work was first published by Macmillan in 1978. Having been sold in the very first year of its publication the book remained out of print all these years. While dramatic developments have taken place in the field of Akali politics over the years the findings contained in this work still remain relevant and, hence, the need for this new edition.

The work tries to explain the essentially non-violent nature of the Akali Movement. The study shows how the Akali leaders in the past succeeded in channelising the popular religious upsurge during the Movement (1920-25) into a powerful instrument for India's struggle for freedom and brought the Sikh community into the mainstream of Indian nationalism. Three distinct features of the past struggle made it more effective than its later manifestations in the form of struggle for Panjabi Suba and more recent Akali agitation (1978-84). The first was that the Akali leadership realised the value of press and public opinion. They not only started an English daily, *The Hindustan Times,* in addition to two vernacular papers, *Akali* (Urdu) and *Akali te Pardesi* (Punjabi), but also carried with them the non-Sikh population and the nationalist leadership. The second was that from the very beginning they eschewed violence and quickly disowned the violent activities of the splinter group, the Babbar-Akalis. And thirdly the movement was never allowed to take a communal turn.

The extant literature on the Movement has not been able to do full justice to the subject as it has either ignored the Akali contribution to the political struggle in the country by depicting it as a 'mere movement of religious reform' or allowed the biased opinions of the authors to dominate their critical and objective judgement. With the exception of a well-known work in Punjabi,[1] in which an attempt has been made to project the political aspect of the Movement along with its religious

---

1. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas,* Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1970.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

achievements, the only two other important works are, Teja Singh's *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening* and Ruchi Ram Sahni's *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines* (edited by Dr.Ganda Singh). These depict only a part of the religious struggle with a some what pro-Akali bias.

Biographies and commemoration volumes on some of the important Akali leaders as also the accounts of the national leaders and the British officials directly or indirectly concerned with the Movement, too, do not give an objective account of the Akali struggle. Similarly, a large number of Panjabi pamphlets, tracts and other popular forms of literature, written during or after the Movement, are more in the nature of emotional and religious appeals and rather exaggerated and involved account of the authors' own sufferings and contributions to the Akali struggle than accounts of the Movement itself.

In the official records, C.I.D. reports, confidential memoranda and press communiques, etc., the Akali activities have either been underrated or overstated. On the one hand, the Panjab Government in its reports to the Viceroy of India described the situation in the province as 'normal and under control', while on the other, in order to justify its repressive measures against the extremists in the Akali camp, it charged them with 'entertaining political designs under the cloak of religion with the ultimate object of subverting the British rule and re-establishing the Sikh Raj'. In spite of the Akalis amply demonstrating their strict adherence to the vow of non-violence at Nankana, Guru-ka-Bagh, Jaito and other places, and the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee's open and repeated dissociation from the terrorist activities of the Babbar Akali militants, the official machinery continued to charge the Akali leadership with 'maintaining secret contacts with the authors of Babbar outrages' and with having associations with the revolutionaries in Bengal, Afghanistan, Turkey and the Communist International. It was mainly on the basis of these 'charges' that the Panjab Government described the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal as 'Organisations of disorder, working towards treasonable ends', declared them 'unlawful associations' and tried their leadership on charges of 'treason against the King-Emperor'.

But an objective and dispassionate study of the Movement reveals that it was neither a mere 'Movement of Gurdwara Reform' as is asserted by some of the pro-Akali writers, nor an 'organisation

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

working towards treasonable ends' as alleged by the government agencies. It was a peaceful struggle of the Akali reformers directed against the Mahants, priests and other vested interests in the Sikh shrines on the one hand, and against the repressive administration in Panjab on the other. There is, therefore, the need to re-assess and re-evaluate the role of the Akali Movement and to bring to light its notable contribution to the struggle for freedom in India.

Being a revised version of author's doctoral thesis at the University of Delhi, the present work is a detailed study of the five-year period (1920-25) which materially changed the course of history in Panjab and strengthened the forces of nationalism in the country.

In the first chapter, the origin and evolution of the institution of Gurdwaras, their early management, introduction of hereditary control by the Mahants and the infiltration of the evil practices which led to attempts at purification, have been discussed in detail. Brief mention has also been made of the socio-economic and political factors which directly or indirectly influenced the Akali Movement and helped in widening the scope of its activities.

The second chapter delineates the Akali struggle for religious reform. Rather than dwelling on a mere narrative of events and managerial overhaul of over two-hundred Gurdwaras, only case studies of a few of the more important historic shrines have been made. The chapter also describes how the Mahants of smaller and less important Gurdwaras yielded to the Akali pressure and how the authorities re-adjusted their politics to combat the Movement.

The third chapter describes how the Akalis widened the scope of their activities. By entering the political arena over a relatively minor local issue, they eventually attracted the attention of national leaders and soon became an important factor in the struggle against British imperialism.

Chapter four has been devoted to a discussion of the Akali activities in the Sikh States - particularly the Akali involvement in the Nabha affair and the oppressive measures initiated by the Sikh princes to 'combat this dangerous movement'.

In chapter five the author attempts an analysis of the organisational set-up of the Akali Movement, the formation and growth of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal. This chapter, also discusses the official policy towards the Akali leadership and the circumstances

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

leading to declaration of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal as 'unlawful associations'.

The activities of the Babbar Akali militants figure in Chapter six. On the face of it, inclusion of the Babbar Akali movement may seem rather out of place in the present work as neither the objective nor the *modus operandi* of the Babbars was in tune with the Akali programme, nevertheless it has been included because these activities contributed considerably to the success of the Movement.

In chapter seven several attempts at a legislative solution of the Akali problem and the cases of their repeated failures are discussed. Also Sir Malcolm Hailey's devious manoeuvres with a view to forcing the Akali leadership to come to terms with the Government are presented in a lucid manner.

In chapter eight are discussed the achievements and failures of the Akali Movement, the politicisation of the Sikh masses in the wake of the Akali struggle, the emergence of the nationalist Sikh leadership and the change in Anglo-Sikh relations. In this chapter also figures the impact of the Akali Movement on contemporary Panjab politics, the Akali-Congress relationship and future trends in the Sikh religion and politics. Some significant conclusions arrived at on the basis of the study made in the previous chapters are also set out at the end.

In the present work an attempt has been made to re-assess and re-evaluate the role of the Akali Movement on the basis of fresh evidence found in official records, private and family papers and the once-proscribed literature now available in India and the United Kingdom. Both the official as well as the Akali sources on the subject have been studied. In the event of conflicting reports, misrepresentations, exaggerations and, in some cases, deliberate suppression of facts in the official accounts as well as popular pamphlet literature on the subject, an effort has been made to verify the facts and figures by comparing these with additional and independent evidence. Since Panjabi words like Gurdwaras, Mahants, Morchas and Jathas occur too frequently, they have been italicized only in the first instance with explanations provided either in the notes or the glossary.

The project was fraught with many inherent difficulties. The original records of the Panjab Government were for most part

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

left at Lahore at the time of the partition of the country and access to these was not possible. The S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal, the two bodies which launched and directed the Akali struggle for five years, also failed to preserve most of their records. But the author's keen desire to take up the challenge and the constant support and encouragement of his teachers and friends had been so compelling that undaunted by the fact of the non-availability of various sources under one roof, he moved from place to place to complete the task. The project required visiting all possible sources, individuals and institutions and locating and copying whatever relevant material could be obtained. During these hunts for source material, the author was able to collect a good deal of information from official files, Native Press Abstracts, District Gazetteers, Census Reports, Notes from the Army Staff, Fortnightly and Secret Reports, Proceedings of the Legislative Council of Panjab and the Legislative Assembly of India, etc. Old issues of the various native and foreign newspapers available in India and United Kingdom too have been of great help.

The India Office Library, the British Museum and the British (Newspaper) Library, London, have proved rich repositories of source material on the subject. Private and family papers of Sir Malcolm Hailey, General Birdwood, Sir James Dunnett, Sir H.W. Emerson and a number of other British officials directly or indirectly connected with the Akali Movement provided valuable and authentic material. The Hailey Papers, in particular, have been very useful. Out of thirty-six voluminous files comprising some four thousand pages, most of them pertain to the Akali Movement. These papers include not only the correspondence between Hailey and other British officials and nationalist leaders, but also top secret and confidential reports, telegrams, press communiques, minutes of various meetings and cuttings from native and foreign newspapers.

Old issues of the *Civil and Military Gazette* have proved useful in studying the details of the official policy and the activities of the Mahants, the Sikh Sudhar Committees and other anti-Akali elements. At the British Museum a large number of popular Panjabi pamphlets on the Movement banned at the time by the government but now available there in the section on Proscribed Indian Books were consulted. The need to consult the private collections of almost all the important officials concerned with the Movement helped in locating a number of families with useful material. Private papers

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of some prominent national and Akali leaders have come handy and interviews with a number of people connected with the Movement who are still living have been of inestimable value.

The author owes a deep debt of gratitude to the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; the Panjab State Archives, the Punjabi University Library, Patiala; the Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College and Sikh Refernce Library, Amritsar; the India Office Library, the British Museum, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the South Asia Centre, Cambridge, and to Sir George Dunnett, Mrs. J.B. Shearer and Mr. G.H.Emerson for providing access to their valuable collections. Thanks are also due to the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, for their travel and maintenance grant for field work in the United Kingdom. But for the financial assistance given by the Council, consultation of some of the very important and basic source materials on the subject in the United Kingdom would not have been possible.

I also wish to record my obligation to Bhai Jodh Singh, Sardar Sohan Singh Josh, Principal Niranjan Singh and Giani Mahan Singh, who helped the project with their opinions on some of the controversial issues of the Movement; to Sir Pendrel Moon, Sir C.Y.Fyell, Dr. R.J.Bingle and Major J.B.Harrison, for their help in the location and collection of source materials.

Deep gratitude is due to my teachers Dr.Ganda Singh and Prof. Bipan Chandra for their guidance, love and affection. Thanks are due to Professors Harbans Singh, Amrik Singh, Ravinder Kumar and Barun De for their scholarly comments and suggestions on the subject.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PANJAB STUDIES MOHINDER SINGH
NEW DELHI.
AUGUST, 1997

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Contents

Preface		ix
Chapter 1	Historical Background	1
Chapter 2	Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines	15
Chapter 3	Struggle against the Government	42
Chapter 4	The Akali Struggle in the Sikh States	62
Chapter 5	The Organisation, Base and Leadership of the Movement	87
Chapter 6	The Babbar Akali Movement	113
Chapter 7	The Gurdwara Legislation and the Finale	126
Chapter 8	Impact of the Movement and some Broad Conclusions	137
Notes		151

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Chronology of Important Events			188
Glossary of Panjabi Words			191
List of Abbreviations			193
Appendix	I	Copy of Letter from C.M. King, Commissioner, Lahore Division, to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi	195
Appendix	II	J.M. Dunnett's Order Stopping Supplies to Guru-ka-Bagh	196
Appendix	III	Panjab Government's Order declaring the S.G.P.C. and Akali Jathas as 'unlawful associations'	197
Appendix	IV	Guru-ka-Bagh: An Eyewitness Account by C.F. Andrews	198
Appendix	V	Draft Statement of Jawaharlal Nehru written in the Nabha Jail	205
Appendix	VI	S. Zimand's Letter to Mahatma Gandhi Regarding Firing on the Shahidi Jatha at Jaito	212
Appendix	VII	List of Editors, Printers and Publishers of Newspapers Punished for their Sympathy with the Akalis	216
Appendix	VIII	List of Newspapers in the Panjab which Supported the Akali Movement	218
Appendix	IX	List of Newspapers in the Panjab which Opposed the Akali Movement	220
Biography			221
Index			239

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

1

Historical Background

Evolution of the Institution of Gurdwara

Sikh shrines, popularly called *Gurdwaras* or *Dharamsals,*[1] have played a vital role in shaping the course of events of the five hundred-year old history of the Sikhs and in the development of the Sikh religious tradition. An important part of the Sikh triad—the Guru, the *Granth* and the Gurdwara—the latter has been traditionally the centre of the religious, social, cultural and political life of the Sikhs. Established by Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, as centres of religious activity and social and moral instruction, and for providing food and shelter to the poor and the needy, the history of their origin and development is as old as that of the Sikh faith itself.

As the unity of the Godhead and the brotherhood of mankind were the basic tenets of the faith of Guru Nanak, special attention was paid by him to the establishment of the twin institutions of *sangat* and *pangat*[2] to translate his teachings into practice and to do away with the existing distinctions of castes and classes, of high and low, of rich and poor. Guru Nanak left behind a sangat wherever he went with the injunction to build a Dharamsal for the purpose of meeting in a common forum.[3] These two institutions thus became Nanak's laboratories for both the demonstration and the practice of his

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

teachings.[4] Therein the Guru's Sikhs[5] met daily in the mornings and in the evenings to hear a recital of the Guru's teachings and to sing his hymns.[6]

These Dharamsals became meeting places for the discussion of general problems concerning the welfare of the Sikhs. Gradually, they developed into centres of education and higher learning, shelters for the poor, the needy and the orphans and as resting places for travellers. It was in these congregations in the Dharamsals that the followers learned practical lessons in Sikhism and freed themselves from the prejudices of caste and *varna*. Mohsin Fani, the author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahab*,[7] had witnessed the Sikh religion in practice at Kiratpur under the direct guidance of the sixth and the seventh Gurus, Hargobind and Har Rai, in the forties of the seventeenth century. According to him, the Sikhs ignored the monopoly of the Brahmins in social and religious matters and men from all the four varnas freely entered the Sikh Dharamsals and partook of the sacred *prasad* and free meals served in the *Guru-ka-langar*.[8]

Each sangat was placed under the charge of a revered leader, appointed either by Guru Nanak himself or nominated by the congregation in cases where it was not practical for the Guru to do so personally. The twin institutions of sangat and pangat were continued by the successors of Guru Nanak. The third Guru, Amar Dass (1479-1574), further extended the work of propagation by setting up twenty-two *Manjis*[9] in different areas. In addition to the propagation of Sikhism, those placed in charge of various Manjis were also required to collect the contributions offered by the devotees and to pass them on to the Guru's headquarters.

In view of the increasing need for money to carry out the work on the holy tanks and the development of the new town of Amritsar, the fourth Guru, Ram Dass, established a new Order of Sikh preachers called *Masands*.[10] The Masands were full-time religious preachers who, in addition to the propagation of the Sikh faith, were also required regularly to collect the subscription from the devotees in their respective areas. At the end of the year, on the Baisakhi day, they visited Amritsar to render an account of the offerings received by them and to report on the progress of the propagation work. The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, further elaborated and reorganised this new Order of Masands. He also ordered that

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in future every Sikh was to set aside *dasvandh* (one-tenth) of his income for the Guru's fund and to remit it through an accredited Masand who, along with the sangat of his area, was to visit and present the collection to the Guru in person on the Baisakhi day.[11] These measures, apart from ensuring a regular flow of offerings for the construction of the city and the temple at Amritsar, also resulted in the emergence of a large number of new sangats in the country. From Bhai Gurdas, we learn that the number of the Sikhs had been steadily increasing and during the days of Guru Arjan Dev, they became a powerful force with a distinct social and moral code.[12]

These Masands, together with the sangat, formed the pivot of the Sikh organisation serving the Sikh cause creditably for quite some time. They were chosen for their piety, integrity and high position and were honorary officers. But during the days of the seventh Guru, Har Rai (1630-61), due to his absence from the main centres of Sikh activity and also due to the hostility of the disappointed claimants to the *Gurugaddi*, the Masand system decayed. During the brief pontificate of the child Guru Harkishan, (1656-64), the Masands came out in open support of Ram Rai and other pretenders to the *gaddi*. By the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's succession, the Masands had become so audacious as to deny the Guru entry into the Hari Mandir at Amritsar.[13] 'The Masands began to beat and plunder poor Sikhs and threatened with the Guru's curse all who resented their conduct... They became proud and rebellious...'[14] Thus when the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, found that the Masands, instead of propagating the Sikh faith and forwarding the collections to the Guru—the purpose for which their Order was created - were misusing the offerings and had become forces of disruption in the Sikh community, he abolished their Order.[15] The Guru even commanded his followers not to have any kind of association with the Masands and ordered "henceforth the Sikhs should themselves present their offerings, and that the employment of the Masands for the purpose shall cease".[16]

In accordance with the Sikh tradition, in the earlier days the priests or other persons placed in charge of various sangats or Dharamsals, following the advice of Guru Nanak,[17] did not look upon the offerings as their personal property. Instead, they utilised them for the purpose of running free kitchens and other similar works for the welfare of the community. Even later traditions highlight

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

that some of the priests such as Bhai Lakha Singh, Bhagat Singh and Suba Singh, having refused personal *jagirs* offered to them by various Sikh chiefs.[18]

Gurdwaras Pass into the Hands of the Mahants

During the early eighteenth century, after the arrest and the subsequent execution of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716, and till the rise of the Sikh *Misaldars* later in the century, there occurred large-scale persecution of the Sikhs at the hands of Emperors Bahadur Shah and Farrukh Siyyar and their Governors in the Panjab, Abdus Samad Khan, Zakaria Khan and Mir Mannu,[19] and later at the hands of the Abdali invader Ahmad Shah from 1748 to 1767. As large number of Sikhs along with Sikh preachers were forced into exile, the Sikh shrines passed into the control of the *Udasis*[20] or those who professed Sikhism but did not strictly conform to its outward symbols and could thus escape persecution. The Udasis in charge of various Gurdwaras at this time rendered an important service to the Sikh religion by keeping the Gurdwaras going. They were highly respected as men of high moral character and integrity. They were also well-versed in the Sikh scriptures and devoted themselves chiefly to reciting and expounding the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.[21] Most of the Udasis, who looked to ecclesiastic jobs in different Gurdwaras, were not attached to any particular shrine or to its wealth and property but moved from place to place. There were, however, some who established institutions, admitted *chelas* or followers and became heads of their *deras, akharas* and Gurdwaras and came to be known as Mahants.[22] In the earlier stages, these Mahants enjoyed the confidence and reverence of the sangats of their areas and followed the advice and warning of Guru Nanak not to covet the offerings. They also warned their chelas, at the time of admission into their order, to 'avoid two deadly temptations—gold and women.'[23] These Mahants also nominated their successors to the *gaddis*. Their nominees were accepted by the sangats as both the Mahants and their chelas enjoyed popular esteem and confidence. But this tradition of purity and austerity seems to have deteriorated as a result of the increase in their income, derived from revenue-free jagirs bestowed on most of the historic shrines by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other Sikh Misaldars.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Corruption in the Sikh Shrines

The rise of the powerful Sikh Misaldars in the later eighteenth century and the subsequent coming into political power of Ranjit Singh in 1799 A.D. led to the institutionalisation of the Sikh religion, the introduction of complicated rites and ceremonies in Sikh religious practices and the emergence of rich and powerful Mahants. Almost all the well-known Gurdwaras were endowed with rich tax-free jagirs by the Sikh Misaldars and later by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. With the sudden increase in the income of the Mahants of some of the important Gurdwaras, there came a change in the style of living of some of them. Still, as long as the income from the jagirs was small, the Mahants consulted the Sikh sangats of the area about the management of the shrines and the endowments attached to them. But with the opening of a network of canals in the Panjab during the second half of the nineteenth century, there was an enormous increase in the value of the jagirs. As a result, the Mahants and their growing flocks began to convert the trust property of the Gurdwaras into their personal possessions. This was in flagrant disregard of the injunctions laid down by the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh scriptures.[24] Gradually, the Mahants and their chelas began to live a life of luxury and dissipation verging on depravity.

Religious, Social and Political Awakening

Though after the annexation of the Panjab to the British Empire in 1849, most of the Sikh shrines had passed into the control of the hereditary Mahants and the Government-nominated managers and custodians and the religious leaders of the Sikh community had fallen prey to a number of social evils, no organised movement of reform could be launched against them for want of a general awakening among the Sikhs. The Akali struggle for reform in the early twentieth century arose from such purely provincial movements as the Nirankari, the Namdhari and the Singh Sabha in conjunction with all-India movements such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Dev Samaj and the Arya Samaj. The increasing political consciousness and

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

response to nationlist upsurge throughout the country also played a large part. It was the cumulative effect of these internal and external forces which created an awakening among the people in the Panjab and also the desire among the Sikhs to reform their shrines.

Social and Religious Reform Movements

I. *The Nirankari Movement*

As mentioned earlier, the first traces of relapse of the Sikh faith were noticed during the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule in the Panjab. Baba Dayal[25] was the first among the Sikh religious reformers to have preached against the evils that had slowly crept into the Sikh social and religious life. He preached against idolatry, worship of graves, tombs and trees and belief in other complicated Brahmanical rites and ceremonies and exhorted his followers to worship one Nirankar (God).[26] Though Baba Dayal was able to attract a number of followers, known as 'Nirankaris' because of their belief in one Nirankar and who followed Sikh ceremonies in birth, death, marriage and other social usage, yet his movement could not make a very wide impact on the Sikh masses who still lacked education and awakening.[27]

II. *The Namdhari Movement*

The Namdhari movement, popularly known as the Kuka movement, made its appearance next. Started by Bhagat Jawahar Mal and Baba Balak Singh,[28] the movement became a powerful force of religio-political revival among the Sikhs under one of the latter's disciples, Baba Ram Singh.[29] Baba Ram Singh particularly enjoined upon his followers the worship of one God through prayer and meditation. The Rehatnamas (morall codes) prepared and enforced by him exhorted all his followers to be engaged at all times in the worship of God.[30] He also preached against social evils such as the caste-system, female infanticide, early marriage and barter of daughters in marriage and popularised simple and inexpensive Anand marriage.[31] The teachings of Baba Ram Singh seem to have

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

had a wide appeal to the Sikh masses. Contemporary European officials viewed the growing popularity of Baba Ram Singh's mission with serious concern.[32]

Though Baba Ram Singh's mission was specially marked by teachings of righteousness, toleration and mercy yet some of his followers got out of control and in a fit of religious frenzy committed certain excesses which resulted in a clash with the Government.[33] Some of his more fanatic followers who became excited over the killing of cows, murdered the butchers at Amritsar, Raikot and Malerkotla and were, as a punishment, blown off from the cannon's mouth.[34] Though there is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to whether the movement was religious or political, there is no denying the fact that the official action against the Kukas created great hatred for British rule in the minds of the people in the Panjab which helped prepare the ground for the subsequent relgio-political struggle of the Akalis in the early twentieth century.[35]

III. *The Singh Sabha Movement*

The year following the persecution of the Kukas and the suppression of their movement saw the birth of the Singh Sabha (1873 A.D.). The Singh Sabha movement and its activities had a much wider appeal to the Sikh masses and, consequently, made a far greater impact. The promoters of the Singh Sabha movement, most of whom belonged to the educated class, were connected with other socio-religious movements in the Panjab and were aware of similar movements in the country. They ascribed the corruption in the Sikh religio-social life to the lack of education among the Sikhs. They believed that religious reformation could be brought about only when the masses were made aware of their cultural heritage. The movement gained quick support from the Sikh elite and such prominent Sikh scholars of the time as Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh, Bhai Ditt Singh and Professor Gurmukh Singh joined the ranks of the Singh Sabha.[36]

Though the Singh Sabha aimed mainly at religious reform through the spread of education and consciously refrained from discussing political questions or in any way incurring the displeasure of the British rulers, the religious propaganda of some of its preachers had marked political overtones. For instance, when it was argued that vicious social customs and the neglect of religion and education

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

were the direct causes of the political downfall of the Sikhs, most of the preachers put it as an axiom that 'never had the Sikh nation fallen so low or was in so wretched a plight as during the British rule.'[37] And again, 'never was the education', they argued, 'so backward, temporal resources so straintened and disease and poverty so rampant.'[38]

Following perhaps the advice of the Singh Sabha leadership who either because of their own vested interests as landed magnets or because of their conception of the interests of the Sikhs did not want to incur the displeasure of the British rulers, these Updeshaks did not hold the British Government directly responsible for the manifold social and religious ills; but it was difficult to totally dissociate 'the idea of responsibility of the Paramount Power from the deplorable state of affairs that was depicted by these preachers.'[39] While referring to the halcyon days of Ranjit Singh's rule in the Panjab, they compared the present degraded conditions of the Sikhs with the past hardships under the Mughals. It was suggested that this similarity in conditions under the Mughals and the British 'was due to the similarity in causes'.[40]

However, the major contribution of the Singh Sabha leadership lay in the creation of a network of Khalsa schools, colleges and other centres of learning. The Singh Sabha leaders felt that the spread of education among the Sikhs needed the help and friendship of the British rulers. They, therefore, sought the patronage of the Viceroy and other British officials. Soon after the establishment of the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, an active campaign was started for the foundation of a central college for the Sikhs around which was to be organised a system of schools in the outlying districts. Educational activities of the Singh Sabha received ready support and patronage from the Government of India and the British officials in the Panjab. It was with this assistance from the British officials and the rulers of the Sikh princely states that the Khalsa College was founded at Amritsar in 1892.

Though the promoters of the Khalsa College and their British patrons founded the college for purely educational advancement, the students and some of the teachers there could not escape the influence of the prevailing political unrest in the province and the growing movement of nationalism in the country. The C.I.D. officials reported to the authorities that the Khalsa College had, by 1907, 'become an important centre for inculcating national feelings among the students'.[41] It was reported that some of the teachers

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

were addressing 'openly seditious lectures' to their students and instilled anti-British feelings in their minds'.[42] In any case, the teachers of the college had failed to 'mould students into loyal subjects of the British crown'.[43] It was perhaps due to the influence of these politically conscious teachers and the inspiration of Gokhale, Gandhi [44] and other nationalist leaders that the students demonstrated twice against the European officers who visited the college with a view to suggesting certain measures to curb the growing anti-British feeling among the college students.[45]

To check the growing political consciousness and feelings of nationalism in the college, the Government of the Panjab reconstituted the college managing committee so as to ensure better official control over its affairs. By the new arrangement, the Commissioner of the Lahore Division became the ex-officio President and the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, the Director of Public Instructions, the political Agent, Phulkian States and the European Principal became ex-officio members of the new managing committee. With all the members being nominated and removable by the Government, the college virtually passed into the hands of the Government. As a result some of the earlier members of the committee and the teachers with advanced political views were made to resign. This aroused the anger of the extremists among the Sikh leaders. Master Sunder Singh tried to arouse popular feelings by asserting that the college was no longer in the hands of the Sikhs. In an anti-British pamphlet entitled *Ki Khalsa Kalaj Sikhan da Hai?*, published in 1911,[46] he accused the British Government of 'having robbed the Sikhs of their college just as they had, by gross breach of faith, previously swallowed up the Panjab'. The pamphlet also denounced the pro-British Sikh leaders like Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia as 'traitors for their having brooked the official interference in the Khalsa College'.[47]

The socio-religious movements among the Sikhs exposed the evils which had slowly crept into the Sikh social and religious life and indirectly inculcated in them a desire for reform. The growing political unrest in the Panjab in the early twentieth century; the influence of the nationalist press and above all the growing forces of nationalism in the country further added to the growing unrest among the masses and prepared the ground for the coming Akali struggle directed against the Mahants and other vested interests

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in Sikh shrines on the one hand and against the British imperialism in Panjab on the other.

Growing Political Unrest in the Panjab

The discontentment among the Panjabis with the British rule, which had been felt even before the occupation of the Panjab by the British in 1849, found its first organised expression in the form of the 'Agrarian Unrest' in 1907.[48] The trouble in the canal colonies, which was mainly agrarian in character, was the outcome of deep-rooted economic and political problems,[49] which found their outlet in the form of protests against the Colonisation Bill which, apart from altering the earlier agreements made with the settlers about the ownership under the Act of 1893 also provided for higher rates of land revenue and irrigation.[50] The agrarian unrest of 1907 was perhaps the first instance in the Panjab in which the rural classes, especially the Jat Sikh peasantry in the canal colonies, gave expression to their discontent against the policies of the British Government. The nationalist press in the Panjab and outside supported their cause and demanded withdrawal of the Bill.[51] The occasion was also utilised by the nationalist leaders in the Panjab, like Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and Syed Hyder Mirza, to make the peasantry politically conscious. Banke Dayal's popular Panjabi song '*Pagri Sambhal Oh Jatta, Pagri Sambhal Ohe*" —(oh peasant guard your turban)—reminded the Panjabi peasantry of their miserable economic condition and exploitation by the pro-British landed aristocracy and stirred them to action against the injustices of the British rule.[52]

The authorities in the Panjab took strong action against the agitators and their leaders, deporting Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. But when the higher authorities in Delhi realised that the measure had caused uneasiness among the Sikh soldiers, many of whom had families and relatives in the colonies, the Viceroy of India repealed the Colonisation Bill.[53]

Though the veto of the Bill and the reduction in the land and water rates quietened popular agitation, the agrarian unrest exploded the myth of the loyalty of the Panjabis and marked the beginning of mass political awakening in the province.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The Ghadrite Propaganda

The revolutionary Ghadr propaganda made major headway in the Panjab during the First World War. Panjabi emigrants to the USA were the largest component of the Ghadr movement. Sohan Singh Bhakna was the founding President of the association of 'Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast', which came to be popularly known as the Ghadr Party because of its organisers' attempts to create Ghadr (rebellion) in India at the time of First World War.[54] During the War, the Ghadrites made serious efforts to develop contacts with Indian soldiers, particularly the Sikh regiments in the Panjab.[55] Some of the Ghadrite leaders set out for India in August 1914. They fixed 21 February 1915 as the date for a simultaneous rising in the military cantonments at Peshawar, Ferozepur, Ambala, Faizabad and elsewhere. But their plans leaked to the authorities who were able to take timely measures and thus foil their schemes.

Though the efforts of the Ghadrites to foster an uprising in India failed due to organisational weaknesses, lack of support from the masses, opposition from the pro-British landed leaders of the Sikhs in the Panjab and the disapproval of the Ghadrites' programme by Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders,[56] they were nevertheless able to make a major contribution towards the articulation of discontentment against the British rule by inspiring many people with their patriotic and revolutionary propaganda.

Apart from instilling revulsion for foreign rule, the Ghadrite activities also created a spirit of defiance of authority among the extremists in the Panjab which later found expression in the form of the Babbar Akali Jathas during the Akali struggle for Gurdwara reform.

Post-War Discontent

The demolition of the wall of Gurdwara Rakabganj, Delhi, the tragedy of Budge-Budge, the demobilisation of the Sikh soldiers after the War and the unsatisfactory treatment meted out to them during the War further added to the discontent created by the Ghadrite propaganda. Apart from giving the Sikh soldiers a sense of confidence as a result of the repeated British propaganda about the 'superior martial qualities of the Sikhs' and 'their gallant deeds', their adventures abroad during the War also broadened their outlook. Many

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of them who fought in West Asia and Western Europe came into contact with the nationalist propaganda regarding the mal-treatment of Indians in Canada and the USA because of their race and colour. They also heard about the infamous conspiracy trials and the hangings and deportations of Sikhs and other Indians. Both during the War and later, on their return to India, they heard from their fellow villagers and relatives about the internment of nearly 5000 of their folk for alleged sympathy with the Ghadrites, of the enforcement of the Indent System, under which every village was forced to provide a certain number of recruits and of the coercions to raise funds for the War. After their demobilisation, most of the Sikh soldiers returned to their native villages only to add further to the growing woes of the people at home. Arbitrary cuts in the pensions of these soldiers, their disappointment at the non-fulfillment of various promises of rewards made to them for loyal services during the War, rendered these people utterly disillusioned and thus sowed the seeds of economic and political unrest in the province.

Several other factors contributed to the aggravation of political unrest : the summer monsoon failed; the rabi harvest was extremely poor; the cost of living rose higher than ever before; a special tax was imposed on the urban population; and furthermore there was influenza epidemic.[57]

Rowlatt Bills and Subsequent Agitation

In the climate of depression and discontentment, the Government added fuel to the fire by introducing the Rowlatt Bills in January 1919.[58] Mahatma Gandhi, who had earlier been leading the agitation against the Bills, gave a call for complete *hartal* to mark the people's resentment and disapproval of the official measures. Hartal was observed in all the important towns of the Panjab on 30 March 1919 and again on 6 April 1919. In Amritsar, Doctors Kitchlew and Satyapal took a leading part in organising the hartal in which people belonging to different classes took part. This communal harmony in the Panjab combined with the fact of increasing uneasiness among the Sikhs, seems to have caused concern in official circles. As a result, the two leaders were quietly whisked away to Dharamsala. As soon as the news of their deportation reached the people in the city, they assembled in a crowd and marched

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

to the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow to register their protest. The police tried to stop the demonstrators on the way and in trying to disperse them killed half a dozen people and wounded thirty.[59] The action of the police infuriated the people who retaliated by attacking European officials and civilians and also official buildings in the city. In this riot five Englishmen were killed and an English lady missionary assaulted. Disturbances occurred in other parts of the province—Lahore, Kasur, Jullundur and Multan being the important centres.[60]

Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy and its Impact

This outburst of popular unrest created panic among the British officials who had so far banked on the myth of the 'loyalty of the Panjabis'. Two days after the happenings at Amritsar, Brigadier-General R.E.H. Dyer arrived at Amritsar with troops and armoured cars. The next afternoon, when he marched his troops through the main streets of the city to overawe the masses, he found the people reacting with *'Hindu Musalman Ki Jai'* and *'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'*.[61] The General proclaimed a state of emergency in the city and declared all meetings and assemblies illegal. The local Congress Committee, which had already announced a meeting at the Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April 1919, did not cancel the original programme in compliance with General Dyer's proclamation. In addition to the people who had gone to attend the Congress meeting, a large number of Sikh villagers, who had gone to the Golden Temple to celebrate Baisakhi and were unaware of the proclamation, also reached Jallianwala Bagh.

As soon as the General received the news of the meeting at Jallianwala Bagh he marched with a platoon of infantry, 'to prevent', in his own words, 'further rebellious acts....'[62] He occupied the only entrance and exit to the Bagh and, without giving any warning to the people assembled there, opened fire, killing 379 and wounding over 2000 persons.[63]

While the country was busy condemning this most brutal action and was engulfed in a wave of shock, horror and consternation, Arur Singh, the Government-appointed *Sarbrah* of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, invited the General to the temple and tried to

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

whitewash his bloodstains by honouring him with a saropa and declaring him a 'Sikh'.[64] The dialogue which took place between Arur Singh and other priests of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat on the one hand, and General Dyer on the other, is worth quoting here:

> 'Sahib', they said, 'you must become a Sikh even as Nikalseyan Sahib became a Sikh'.
>
> The General thanked them for the honour, but he objected that he could not, as a British Officer, let his hair grow long.
>
> Arur Singh laughed, 'We will let you off the long hair', he said.
>
> General Dyer offered another objection. 'But I cannot give up smoking'.
>
> 'That you must do', said Arur Singh.
>
> 'No', said the General, 'I am very sorry, but I cannot give up smoking'.
>
> The priest conceded, 'We will let you give it up gradually.'
>
> 'That I promise you', said the General, 'at the rate of one cigarette a year'.[65]

According to the biographer of General Dyer, the priests proceeded with the pseudo-initiation. General Dyer and Captain Briggs were invested with the five Kakas, the sacred emblems of that war-like brotherhood, and so became Sikhs.'[66]

While the tragedy of Jallianwala lent an impetus to the struggle for the country's freedom, the perfidious and sacrilegious action of Arur Singh brought home to the advocates of reform the urgency of putting a stop to the prevailing system of Gurdwara management, and with it the greed, licentiousness and misdeeds of the Mahants, priests and other vested interests among them. Of the various factors contributing to the growing discontentment among the Sikh community, the fact of gross misuse of their premier shrine at Amritsar at the hands of the Government-nominated Sarbrah and the British officials in the Panjab proved to be the proverbial last straw on the camel's back and thus set the stage for the coming Akali struggle.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

2

Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines

Some Early Phases of the Struggle

As a result of the combination of various factors discussed in the preceding chapter, the first decade of the twentieth century brought about a great religious and political awakening among the Sikhs and a passion for reform to a section of the Sikh community described in the official circles as the 'Neo-Sikhs' or the *Tat Khalsa*. Under the changed climate, these reformers felt that they need no longer remain helpless spectators to the corrupt practices at their religious places. The initiative for reform was taken by the Sikh and pro-Sikh newspapers. As early as 1905, some of the newspapers like the *Khalsa Advocate*, the *Khalsa Samachar*, the *Khalsa Sewak* and *The Panjab* began complaining about the management of the Golden Temple, Amritsar and other important Sikh shrines.[1] The papers expressed grief and pain at the Gurdwaras and other trust holdings being converted into private properties of the Mahants and also other abuses in then prevailing system of management.[2] *The Panjab* reminded the Mahants that 'the Gurdwaras belong to the Sikh community and not the priests, who are mere servants of the Panth.'[3]

Along with the Sikh press, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Singh Sabhas in different areas and the so-called natural leaders of the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sikhs, composed of the Sikh aristocracy and other title-holders, also made some attempts, through their memorials to seek help from the Government in the purification of the Sikh shrines.[4] Various resolutions were passed by the Singh Sabhas condemning the 'base actions' of the Mahants and urging them to improve their ways. But neither the Mahants nor the officials in the Panjab paid any attention to these resolutions and memorials which were couched in a humble tone.[5] Thus, when in the Sikh Educational Conference held at Jullundur on 10-12 April 1914, Sardar Harchand Singh, a militant reformer and political leader from Lyallpur, wanted a strong resolution to be passed protesting against the official action in demolishing the wall of Gurdwara Rakabganj,[6] Delhi, not only was his resolution disallowed but he was even compelled to leave the Conference along with Sardar Teja Singh Samundri and others following his way of thinking.[7] The Chief Khalsa Diwan tried to hush up the matter as it involved condemnation of the British Government. On noticing that the volume of opposition was growing and their inaction was damaging their position, the Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders called a general-body meeting on 31 May 1914, in the Town Hall, Amritsar, and passed a mild resolution: 'That the Government be humbly requested to restore the land and enclosure of the wall of the garden to their original condition'.[8] Lest even this demand antagonise the Government, the resolution added, 'But if, for reasons of state, it is considered essential to change their form, then in the opinion of the Committee it will be acceptable...'[9] Similarly, in the matter of the management of the Khalsa College, Sikh representation on the Council and reform in the management of the Sikh shrines, they would not press their demands beyond the point where official displeasure began.[10]

Again in 1906 under pressure from the Singh Sabhas and the Sikh press, the Chief Khalsa Diwan passed a resolution asking the Government that the rules governing the management of the Golden Temple be so changed as to allow the Panth the right to appoint its manager and other officials. But nothing came even of this.[11]

Realising that mere passing of resolutions did not help the community, some Sikhs of advanced political opinions advocated the adoption of other methods. Boycotting of the temples, exerting greater public pressure on the Mahants and even litigation, were all tried in turn but to no avail. Boycotting did not prove effective

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

as Mahants of most of the Gurdwaras, in which reforms were sought, received an enormous income from the tax-free jagirs attached to almost all the historic shrines yielding a yearly income of lakhs of rupees.[12] Some of the Mahants earned a daily income of over Rs.200 and were therefore able to withstand the stoppage of the offerings of devotees in case of boycott. The method of exerting greater public pressure on the Mahants proved an equal failure as they would readily promise to improve their ways when confronted with strong public pressure, but would revert to their old ways as soon as the pressure of public criticism subsided.[13] The reformers then thought of bringing about improvements in the Gurdwara management through litigation.

Reform through Litigation

In the Charitable and Religious Endowment Act (Act XIV of 1920),[14] some rights were given to the beneficiaries in the control and management of temples. Therefore, the Sikh reformers, in the beginning, went to the courts of law in the hope of obtaining popular control of their sacred places. Here too disappointment was in store for them. The courts could not help the reformers because the law, as it stood then, made it obligatory on the part of two or more beneficiaries of a temple to join hands to go to the Deputy Commissioner for permission to sue the Mahants guilty of misappropriation of funds. The Deputy Commissioner, being a supporter of the vested interests, used his discretion to deny the necessary permission in most of the cases. In other cases, where the reformers succeeded in obtaining the required permission, the cases could not be followed up for want of exorbitant court fees prescribed by the judicial machinery.[15]

Moreover, the law followed its own course, which was very slow. The reformers, full of passion for reform as they were, did not have the patience to wait indefinitely till the law could help them get possession of their temples. Even if the process were to be quickened, this could not have helped the Akali reformers as with the passage of time most of the Mahants had managed to get themselves registered as 'owners' of the trusts rather than their custodians. Though the Mahants were known to be the managers and custodians, and not the owners of the Gurdwaras, the concerned officials tacitly encouraged them to seek the protection of the law

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

which regarded them as 'owners'. Though outwardly the Government of the Panjab professed a policy of 'neutrality', perusal of the official records indicates that the local officials encouraged the Mahants to adopt a stiffer attitude towards the Akali reformers.[16] In some cases wherein the Sikh sangats of the areas succeeded in affecting a change in the management of some of the Gurdwaras through public pressure, the judicial machinery of the Government restored the *status quo* by way of civil notifications.[17]

Being convinced of the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the legal remedies for reform, the reformers now organised themselves in the form of local Akali Jathas.[18] Peaceful agitation was adopted as a weapon to fight the vested interests in the Sikh shrines on the one hand and the bureaucratic machinery in the Panjab on the other. This new weapon, as we shall soon discover, proved very effective and the Akali reformers were able to dislodge the Mahants and other vested interests in the Sikh shrines from their hereditary positions and the Government from its unreasonable stand in the course of a five-year (1920-1925) struggle in the province.

To begin with, the agitation for reform was initiated by the local Akali Jathas in their respective areas but shortly thereafter two representative bodies of the Sikhs, the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shromani Akali Dal, came into existence with the following objectives:

i. to bring the Sikh religious places under Panthic control and management

ii. to do away with the permanent position of the Mahants, thus ending their irresponsibility

iii. to utilise the property and income of the Gurdwaras for the purposes for which they were founded, and

v. to practise the Sikh religion according to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus as preserved in the *Adi Granth*.[19]

In the course of their five-year struggle, these two bodies were not only able to obtain control over all the important Sikh shrines through peaceful agitation and passive sufferings, but also to strengthen the forces of nationalism in the Panjab by ejecting the Mahants, the Government-appointed managers and other vested

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

interests in the Sikh community. As a detailed narrative of the reform of over three hundred large and small Gurdwaras liberated by the Akalis is not possible in the present work, it has been limited only to the discussion of some of the most important Sikh shrines such as the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat at Amritsar, Gurdwara Babe-di-Ber at Sialkot, shrines at Nankana, Tarn Taran, Panja Sahib, Guru-ka-Bagh, and Jaito, etc.

Once the important Sikh shrines came under Akali control, the Mahants in charge of smaller Gurdwaras either voluntarily submitted to the authority of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee or were made to surrender their shrines and the jagirs attached to them under the provisions of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill passed by the Punjab Legislative Council in July 1925.

Gurdwara Babe-di-Ber

Chronologically the first Gurdwara to be reformed through agitation was Babe-di-Ber, Sialkot.[20] When Harnam Singh, its Mahant, died, his widow had her minor son appointed as successor under the guardianship of one Ganda Singh, an Honorary Magistrate. There was a wave of resentment among the Sikhs throughout the Panjab against this action, and various Singh Sabhas sent telegrams to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab conveying their protest against this 'outrage'.[21] The collector, however, decided to ignore all popular opposition and sanctioned the *mutation* in favour of the minor Mahant Gurcharan Singh. The reformers reacted by filing a civil suit in the court of the District Judge who ordered the plaintiffs to pay a court fee of Rs.50,000 by 30 August 1920.[22] As the reformers could not collect such a huge amount, their complaint was rejected.

Having thus failed to achieve their objective through recourse to the courts, the reformers then resorted to peaceful agitation. The Sikhs of the locality organised themselves and formed a Khalsa Sewak Jatha to reform the Gurdwaras in the city. Under the new programme of action, they started holding weekly (and later daily) services in the Gurdwara. Ganda Singh placed many hurdles in the way of the reformers, but they succeeded in taking over the control of the shrine and re-starting the system of free langar which had been stopped by the new Mahant.[23] On 5 October 1920, the Sikhs held a big Diwan and elected a managing committee of

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

13 members for the control of the Gurdwara.[24] Meanwhile some new developments in the affairs of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat, diverted the attention of the reformers and the arena of struggle shifted from a relatively small town to the Sikh headquarters at Amritsar.

The Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat

Corrupt and non-Sikh practices in the precincts of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat at Amritsar[25] and official control over its management had been sources of great discontentment among the Sikhs long before the beginning of the movement for reform. While the reformers were anxious to free these central seats of the Sikh religion from evil influences and from official control as early as possible, the British authorities in the Panjab resisted any effort at reform or change in the existing system of management which would deprive it of the privilege of using (rather misusing) the religious places of the Sikhs to consolidate their power and to weaken their political opponents.[26] History is full of such instances wherein the Government-appointed Sarbrahs of the Golden Temple were often used for glorifying the British rule and its functionaries. Moreover, with the weakening of the Sikh control over management and the increasing hold of officialdom, the managers and the priests started taking their cue from the Deputy Commissioner, ignoring Sikh opinion and sentiments in the day-to-day affairs of the temple. The Government-appointed Sarbrah, having kept the appointing authority appeased, spent his time in appropriating the huge wealth of the shrine, and consequently, neglected his daily religious duties. Costly gifts to the temple slowly found their way to the homes of the Sarbrah and other priests. The precincts began to be used by Pandits and astrologers; idols were openly worshipped in the Gurdwara premises. According to contemporary accounts, on Basant and Holi festivals the whole place degenerated into a rendezvous for the local rogues, thieves and other bad characters. Pornographic literature was freely sold, and brothels were opened in the neighbouring houses where innocent women visiting the holy temples were made victims of the lust of licentious—Sadhus, Mahants and their friends.[27]

With the general awakening among the Sikhs in the early decades of the twentieth century, they began to resent these increasing evil

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

influences. Realising that any attempt at purification and improvement was not possible till the Gurdwaras were freed from official control, the reformers demanded that the Dastur-ul-Amal (rules) of the Golden Temple be so changed as to allow the Sikh community unfettered say in its management.[28] The Sikh newspapers supported this demand with one voice. A meeting of the Sikh youth held on 22 December 1906 passed a resolution asking the Government to hand over the control of the Durbar Sahib to the Chief Khalsa Diwan.[29] Similar resolutions were also passed in other parts of the Panjab.

The outbreak of the First World War temporarily lulled the stir for reform, but as soon as it ended the question of the control of Durbar Sahib was revived with even greater vigour. The newly formed Central Sikh League, at a meeting held at Amritsar in 1920, referred to the long-standing grievances of the Sikhs and demanded that 'this foremost seat of Sikh faith should be placed in the hands of a representative body of the Sikhs, constituted on an elective basis and responsible for its action to the Panth at large'.[30] Questions regarding the management of the Golden Temple were asked in the Panjab Legislative Council and the Government was requested to make the accounts public.[31] The Government tried to procrastinate, and in a communique dated 14 July 1920, declared that 'the question has been deferred till the implementation of the Reform Scheme in the Panjab Legislative Council when the elected representatives of the Sikhs would be consulted on the issue'.[32]

But this communique failed to check the growing discontent and unrest among the Sikhs. The reformers once again organised public meetings, passed resolutions against official inaction and demanded immediate resignation of the Government-appointed Sarbrah.[33] The Government then tried the use of force to check the rising unrest but failed and decided to pacify the agitators by sending the Sarbrah on two months' leave.[34] This, however, did not help abate the anger of the reformers who held a massive Diwan in the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, and threatened to take out a mock funeral of the effigy of the Sarbrah in case he failed to resign by 29 August 1920.[35] This threat so frightened the Sarbrah that he appeared before the Diwan and with folded hands, begged their forgiveness and announced that he had resigned.[36] This incident was described in the confidential reports of the Panjab Government as a 'decided victory for the party of reform'.[37]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Meanwhile, certain fresh developments at the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat virtually brought these two shrines under the control of the reformers. As stated earlier, the priests at these temples did not like the action of the neo-Sikhs who were converting 'low-caste' persons and advocating their free integration into Sikh social life, including community-dining and inter-marriages. The Khalsa Biradari of Amritsar led them in a procession to the Golden Temple. The Temple priests resisted their admission and refused to accept their offerings and prasad.[38] In the end, as the Holy Book was consulted, the controversy was settled in favour of the reformers. According to a contemporary:

> the words (of the Holy Book) had a wonderful effect ... and the priests were convinced and agreed to offer prayer and accept sacred food at the hands of the newly converted Sikhs.[39]

But this compromise by the priests of the Golden Temple was not approved by the priests of the Akal Takhat who began to vacate their seats when the neo-Sikhs proceeded towards the Akal Takhat. The reform party took up the challenge and appointed their own volunteers to take temporary charge of the ceremonies. Soon a Provisional Committee was formed consisting of nine members, with Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia, the new Sarbrah, as its head.[40]

This rapid march of events resulting in the strengthening of the Panthic control over the management of the Golden Temple along with the simultaneous increase in the Akali control over a large number of Gurdwaras seems to have unnerved the authorities in the Panjab. With a view to counteracting the reported move of the Akali leadership to form a central organisation of their own and control the management of the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras, the Government hastened the announcement of a Provisional Committee of 36 members for the management of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat and other nearby Gurdwaras. The Committee was formed in consultation with Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala. Though it included a few reformers, the majority of its members were from among the loyalists.

The Akali leadership, however, did not allow this strategy of the bureaucracy to succeed and went ahead with its original programme of forming a larger central organisation under the name

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandak Committee (S.G.P.C). Though the 36 members of the official committee were also included in the organisation, the reformers constituted a majority in the S.G.P.C., for out of its 175 members only 40 were known to support the Government.[41] The outmanoeuvred bureaucracy had to wait for a year to implement its notions of official control over the Gurdwaras, when it took over the keys of the *Toshakhana* of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, in October 1921.

Panja Sahib and some other Gurdwaras

During this period local units of Akalis had freed some other Gurdwaras from the control of their Mahants. It appears that the official action in publicly announcing its decision of 'divesting itself of the control of Durbar Sahib' and professing official 'sympathy for the cause of reform', greatly weakened the resistance of the Mahants of some smaller Gurdwaras to the local Jathas engaged in the work of reform. The Akali victory at Amritsar along with the formation of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal meanwhile provided further encouragement to the local Jathas of reformers.

It was against this background that the struggle for the reform of Gurdwara Panja Sahib was renewed with increased vigour. A Jatha of 25 Akalis was despatched from Amritsar under the leadership of Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar. It reached Panja Sahib on 18 November 1920. The next day, when the Jatha was performing *Kirtan*, the new Mahant in a virulent speech declared that the Akalis had no concern with the temple and asked them to leave the premises immediately. The Akalis, on the other hand, insisted that the Jatha should be allowed to complete the Kirtan. While the Jatha was still performing the Kirtan with four hymns still remaining, the Mahant's supporters stood up and began abusing Kartar Singh Jhabbar and other members of his Jatha and thus a clash ensued. When news of this confrontation reached the town, other sympathisers and supporters of the reformers flocked to the Gurdwara. The Akalis thought this to be an ideal opportunity to achieve their object. As a symbol of their having taken over the control of the Gurdwara, Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar took possession of the cash-box containing the daily offerings and declared the Mahant a *Tankhahia*, who was not to be allowed to enter

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the shrine till he went to the Akal Takhat to beg pardon for his acts'.[42] The Mahant's efforts to regain control of the Gurdwara failed. The Panja Sahib Gurdwara thus passed into the control of the reformers and a representative management committee was soon formed to look after it.

The Akali occupation of other smaller Gurdwaras, including Chomala Sahib, Lahore, Tham Sahib in village Jhambr Kalan of Lahore District, Khara Sauda and Kar Sahib at Nankana, Chola Sahib in Ludhiana District, Gurdwara of Sheikhupura and Khadur Sahib in Amritsar district, soon followed. Mahants of most of these shrines on their own swore allegiance to the S.G.P.C. and agreed to serve under it. Others were compelled to do so when the cases pending in the courts had been decided in favour of the Akalis.

Durbar Sahib, Tarn Taran

The Akali reformers had their 'baptism of fire' during the incident at Durbar Sahib, Tarn Taran,[43] in early 1921. This shrine, situated within fifteen kilometres of the city of Amritsar, had been under the same management as that of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat. During the days of Arur Singh, Mahants of Tarn Taran became more or less independent and introduced many evil practices within the precincts of the Gurdwara.[44] After the sanctity of the Gurdwaras at Amritsar had been restored, those at Tarn Taran naturally attracted the attention of the Akali reformers. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, a local leader of the reform movement, is said to have invited the attention of the Mahants to the evils prevalent in the system of management and respectfully asked them to improve their ways.[45] Sardar Lachhman Singh[46] is also said to have made a similar plea, but he and the girls of his school were not allowed to enter the Gurdwara to sing *Shabad*.[47] Similar treatment was meted out to other organisations desirous of reform. When a local Jatha advised the Mahants to arrange for the recitation of Asa-di-Var on 11 January, 1921, the Mahants are said to have beaten up the members of the Jatha with *lathis*. It was widely believed that the Mahants' truculent attitude towards reformers was abetted by the assurance of help given to them by C.M. King, the Commissioner of Lahore Division.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The accounts of growing immoral practices at Tarn Taran and the arrogant and indecent behaviour of the Mahants towards visitors began to reach daily the Akali headquarters at Amritsar. One such story narrated by a woman visitor on 24 January 1921, before a general meeting of the Sikhs at the Akal Takhat, is said to have created a great sensation, arousing the assembled Akalis to immediately march towards Tarn Taran in order to purify the place. The next morning, about 40 Akalis under the leadership of Bhai Teja Singh Bhuchar reached Tarn Taran. The alarmed priests, whose number is estimated to be 70, tried to provoke the Akalis but a clash was avoided through a compromise. The priests agreed to the formation of a Joint Committee to settle the dispute which was a trick to gain time to prepare themselves for an attack. They even announced at night their decision to accept the proposals and asked the Akalis to bring a fair copy of the document to be signed by them. While the Akalis were waiting for the document to be signed, the priests, instead of returning the document, mounted an attack. It was around 9.00 p.m. that the dead-drunk priests pounced upon the peaceful and unsuspecting Akalis. Some members of the Jatha who were inside the Gurdwara were seriously wounded. The priests used lathis, daggers and brickbats. The holy place was soon smeared with the blood of the wounded Akali volunteers, two of whom succumbed to their injuries.[48] On receiving this news, the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police, and other officials rushed to the place to meet the leaders of both the parties. On finding that the Akalis were not to be blamed, they expressed their sympathies for them. By an official order, the priests were barred from entering the Gurdwara until the matter was finally decided by the Prabandhak Committee. The Gurdwara thus came into the hands of the reformers, and a Provisional Committee of management was formed, pending the appointment of a regular committee by the S.G.P.C.[49]

During the struggle for the reform of Tarn Taran the Akalis had to shed their blood for the first time. But the incident at Tarn Taran, heralded, as it were, a greater tragedy soon after at Nankana. It appears that the Government began to tacitly encourage the Mahants and the priests to resist the Akali pressure for changes in the management of the Gurdwaras. While in the beginning, the Government had remained aloof, the Mahants of some smaller

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Gurdwaras had yielded to the ever-increasing public pressure for reform. But the letter[50] which Mr. C.M. King wrote to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi, informing the Mahants that the Akalis ejecting them from their shrines 'were liable to punishment' and that they (the Mahants) 'could go to the courts of law and demand recovery of rights', along with other official assurances of support given to the Mahants incited them to violently resist the efforts of the reformers. The priests could not have offered violent opposition to the peaceful Akali reformers if they had not been sure of the support of the officialdom. After the reported meeting of these priests with Mr. King at Lahore and the assurance of help which he is said to have given them, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, a local leader, wrote to him about the danger which the rumoured assurances posed to the Akalis and requested him to publicly contradict these rumours if there was no substance in them.[51] The failure of Mr. King to do so points to the official complicity in the matter. The trial of the Akali leaders involved in the Tarn Taran incident about a year later, and the sentences passed on them, only tended to confirm the official involvement. Along with the priests who had committed gruesome murders, the Akali reformers were also sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.[52] The Akalis had, of course, following the policy of non-cooperation, refused to offer any legal defence in the courts.

Arbitrary sentences passed on the Akalis by the courts made the Akali leadership believe that the bureaucracy was backing the Mahants. The tragedy of Nankana confirmed the Akali reformers' belief about the official complicity in the matter of the Mahant's preparations and the official opposition to the reform movement. They realised that they could not fight against the Mahants effectively till the Government, which backed the vested interests, was compelled to withdraw its support. Hence, the Akali leadership widened the scope of its earlier programme of Gurdwara reform and launched a two-pronged religio-political struggle in the Panjab directed against the Mahants and other priests on the one hand and against the Government of the province on the other. The tragedy of Nankana was thus a turning point both in the annals of the Akali struggle in the Panjab and in the official policy towards it.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The Nankana Tragedy and its Aftermath

Nankana, the birth place of Guru Nanak, occupies the most important position among the Sikh places of religious worship. Apart from the Gurdwara of Janam Asthan, where the Guru was born, there are over half a dozen other shrines commemorating different events of the early life of the Guru.[53] During the early decades of the twentieth century, the Gurdwara of Janam Asthan came to be controlled by Mahant Sadhu Ram, who was leading an irreligious and licentious life.[54] Mahant Narain Das, who succeeded to the Mahantship after the death of Sadhu Ram, followed his predecessor's pattern of life.[55]

The Sikhs of the area tried to curb the evil practices, but to no effect since the Mahants had the backing of the local British officials. These officials, being themselves party to the excesses in the Gurdwara, were not interested in improvements.[56] The Mahants spent lakhs of rupees out of the Gurdwara funds in offering rich presents to the local officials and others on whose goodwill and support depended their appointment and continuance in office.[57] In return, these officials assured them official help in cases of emergency.[58] It was in this milieu that Narain Das came to occupy the gaddi of the Mahant in Nankana. With a view to warding off the danger of opposition from the Sikh reformers, he is said to have promised the Sikh congregation that the conduct of the old Mahant had gone with him on his funeral pyre and that he would never tread in his predecessor's footsteps. But subsequent events indicated the shallowness of his promises and he was not able to resist evil influences. Moreover, a proper administration of Gurdwara funds and a friendly relationship with the reformers could alienate the sympathy of his official well-wishers and patrons. Soon after his appointment as the Mahant of Janam Asthan, he began to drift towards an immoral life. With the passage of time, he started practising the usual vices. He is said to have illicit relation with a Muhammadan drummer's wife, invited dancing girls to Nankana Sahib and permitted profane singing in the sacred precincts of Janam Asthan. This behaviour of the Mahant was widely condemned and resolutions were passed by various Singh Sabhas expressing indignation at the sacrilege and urging the Government to take steps to prevent such action in the future.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

But these resolutions failed to deter the Mahant. All profane practices in the Gurdwara continued.[59]

This state of affairs in Nankana Sahib attracted attention of the Akali reformers. To begin with, they adopted the usual method of holding Diwans to discuss the deplorable conditions at Janam Asthan and other Gurdwaras at Nankana and called upon the Mahants to reform. One such Diwan was held at Dharowal early in October 1920.[60] A resolution was passed calling upon Mahant Narain Das to improve his ways and cleanse the administration of the temple. This resolution as well as the news that the Golden Temple, Akal Takhat and other Gurdwaras at Amritsar having passed into the hands of the Akali reformers made the Mahant realise the impending danger. But instead of reforming or even arriving at a compromise with the Akalis, Narain Das began to recruit a strong force to resist the Akali Movement. He is also said to have had a personal interview with Mr. C.M. King, the Commissioner of Lahore Division, who gave him an assurance of help in the event of an Akali attack on his shrine.[61] In consultation with Baba Kartar Singh Bedi and other Mahants, Narain Das arranged a meeting at Nankana which was attended by over sixty Mahants. It was decided at the meeting not to recognise the authority of the newly formed S.G.P.C. and a parallel committee was formed with Mahant Narain Das as its President and Mahant Basant Das as the Secretary. A newspaper (*Sant Sewak*) was also started from Lahore to carry on propaganda against the Akali Movement.[62]

After thus organising the Mahants against the Akali reformers, Narain Das started making regular large-scale preparations for what is described in official correspondence as 'self-defence', but was in reality a deep-laid plan to crush the Akali reformers. Fortnightly reports for the second half of November 1920, while making a reference to the possible 'assault' on the Nankana shrine by the extremists, pointed out that the clash was averted because 'the Mahants were prepared'.[63] The personal explanation of Mr. C.M. King before the Panjab Legislative Council and the statements of approvers and the witnesses in the '*Nankana Sahib Case*' confirm Mahant Narain Das's large-scale preparations to meet the Akali challenge.[64] Even the Home Member of the Panjab Government,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sir John Maynard, admitted that 'the information in possession of the Panjab Government indicated an intention on the part of the Mahant to prevent the shrine and its enclosures from being rushed by an attacking party...'[65]

Thus, on the pretext of 'self-defence' and 'fortification of the shrine from being rushed by the Akalis', Mahant Narain Das collected about 400 mercenaries, including notorious outlaws like Ranjha and Rehana, and armed them with swords, lathis, *chhavis, takwas* and other lethal weapons. Arms and ammunition and kerosene were kept in ready stock. According to one of the Mahant's servants, a large number of pistol cartridges were also bought by him from a dealer in Lahore.[66] A further reinforcement of 100 Pathans under the leadership of Ismail Bhatti was also kept ready to strike at a moment's notice.

That the local authorities had full knowledge of the above preparations by the Mahant and had informed the higher echelons is clearly indicated in the fortnightly reports sent to the Government. The Report for the second half of November 1920 - about three months before the tragedy - pointed to the possible assault on the Nankana Shrine and mentioned that the 'Mahants were prepared'. The personal explanation which C.M. King gave in the Panjab Legislative Council also confirms this. In the course of his explanation, he stated, '...similarly it has been rumoured that the Mahant was secretly collecting weapons with which to defend himself from the attack planned on him'.[67] Again, during his visit to Nankana, he saw the Mahant's preparations with his own eyes and noticed that a big iron gate with spy-holes had been installed. Instead of asking the Mahant for an explanation for these large-scale preparations or making adequate police arrangements to deal with the situation, he justified this action of the Mahant by declaring that 'these preparations seemed evidently to be intended for defence against the attack from outside'.[68]

In spite of these instances of the Mahant's preparations and the local officials and residents informing the Deputy Commissioner about his designs, the authorities failed to make any police arrangements or to dissuade the Mahant from coming into armed conflict with the Akali reformers. On the other hand, when the Mahant approached the authorities and asked them for police

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

protection he was told 'to make his own arrangements'.[69] The Mahant was also given a copy of the letter which Mr. C.M. King had earlier written to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi in December 1920. In the letter Mr. King had written, '... that any person who attempts to eject forcibly any Mahant... is liable to punishment under the criminal law...' In the letter, Mr. King also advised the Mahants 'to sue the Akalis for recovery in cases where they had been ejected...'[70] Mr. King is also said to have addressed a letter to Messrs Walter Locke and Company of Lahore to supply any amount of arms and ammunition required by Mahant Narain Das.[71] It was Mr. King's verbal and written assurances of help that encouraged Narain Das and other Mahants to resist the Akali reformers. Official backing stiffened Mahant Narain Das's attitude vis-a-vis the Akali reformers.

In the meantime, the S.G.P.C. was also considering ways and means to bring this important Gurdwara under Panthic control. The preparations of the Mahant were repeatedly discussed by the native press in the Panjab. As the Akali leadership did not want to depart from the policy of non-violence agreed upon earlier, they discouraged the extremist Jathas from attempting forcible occupation of Nankana which could lead to violence and bloodshed. On the other hand, in a meeting held on 24 January 1921, a resolution was passed by the S.G.P.C. calling upon the whole Panth to assemble in a Diwan at Nankana from 4 to 6 March 1921, and to impress upon the Mahant the need for reform. On 6 February, 1921 another meeting of the S.G.P.C. was called in which a five-member committee was appointed to make langar arrangements for the proposed Diwan.[72]

The reported decision of the S.G.P.C. and the prospect of a big Diwan of the Akalis in early March seem to have frightened the Mahant. Meanwhile, he might also have heard the rumours about Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar's plans for forcible seizure of the Gurdwara in case the Mahant failed to amend his ways. As such, he showed some signs of compromise and in a meeting with Kartar Singh Jhabbar agreed to the appointment of a committee of management on certain conditions.[73]

The Mahant's proposal for a dialogue was discussed by the Akali leaders and a five-member committee was formed to negotiate with him. The Mahant was invited to attend an Akali meeting at Sachha Sauda, Sultanpur, to be held from 7 to 9 February

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

1921, but he failed to attend. Another meeting was fixed on 14 February at Sheikhupura, but once again he abstained and asked for a meeting at Lahore, which was agreed to by the Akalis. However, before the meeting could take place, the Mahant seemed to have changed his mind, presumably on the advice of his supporters. Instead of meeting the Akali leaders, he started making further preparations for a confrontation by reinforcing the existing force of 400 mercenaries by engaging 28 more Pathans. A detailed strategy seems to have been evolved and discussed with other Mahants at a secret meeting. According to Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar, the Mahant formed a plan for the murder of top Akali leaders and to this end he agreed to give a lakh and a half of rupees to the hooligans of Manjha, who were to take 12 assassins to Nankana on 6 March.[74] It seems that through repeated postponing of the dates of a meeting with the Akali leadership, the Mahant was gaining time to mount further preparations for a violent confrontation.

The murderous plans of the Mahant seem to have been known to the Akali leadership who made desperate efforts to dissuade the Jathas from going to Nankana before the planned general assembly on 4 March 1921, thus falling into the trap laid by the Mahant. It was with this objective that Sardar Harchand Singh, Teja Singh Samundri and Master Tara Singh were sent to Nankana to stop the Jathas from proceeding to Gurdwara Janam Asthan. These leaders reached Nankana on 19 February 1921, and were joined by Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Master Sunder Singh, Jaswant Singh Jhabal and Dalip Singh. There they all decided to enforce the earlier decision of the Akali leadership not to send the Jathas to Nankana before the fixed date. Dalip Singh and Jaswant Singh were sent to Khara Sauda to meet Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar and to persuade him to abandon his plan for the forcible occupation of Nankana. After having informed Jathedar Jhabbar, Dalip Singh proceeded to Sunderkot to inform Bhai Lachhman Singh not to start for Nankana as planned. On finding that Bhai Lachhman Singh and his Jatha had already left the place, Dalip Singh then proceeded to the factory of Bhai Uttam Singh which was located about a mile away from Nankana.[75]

Bhai Lachhman Singh had started for Nankana late in the evening of 19 February 1921 with a few companions. On the way more people joined him. On the morning of 20 February, the party reached

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

a place half a mile away from Gurdwara Janam Asthan. Here they met a messenger of Bhai Dalip Singh and received a message containing the S.G.P.C.'s instructions not to proceed to Janam Asthan. Bhai Lachhman Singh agreed, but the other members of his Jatha persuaded him that there would be no harm if they visited the Gurdwara and, after paying their homage, returned peacefully. Having been thus persuaded by his companions, Bhai Lachhman Singh proceeded to the Janam Asthan and arrived there at the head of his Jatha at about six in the morning.[76] He and his Jatha thus fell into the trap cleverly laid by Mahant Narain Das.

The arrival of such a large Jatha seems to have led the supporters of the Mahant to believe that the Akalis had come to forcibly occupy the Gurdwara of Janam Asthan in accordance with the earlier plan prepared by Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar. This news was conveyed to the Mahant who had boarded a train for Lahore to attend a meeting of the Mahants there. He thence gave up the planned journey, returned to Janam Asthan and alerted his men.[77]

The Mahant seems to have acted according to a carefully worked out plan. This is borne out by the fact that a few days earlier he had shifted his family and valuables to Lahore. According to an eyewitness account, on getting the news of the arrival of the Jatha the Mahant distributed arms and ammunition to his men and exhorted them to action saying, 'Sikhs are coming, get ready'.[78] As soon as the Jatha entered the main gate of the Gurdwara, the Pathans posted outside, shut the gate at the signal from the Mahant.[79] The members of the Jatha, who were unaware of these designs, sat down after bowing before the holy *Granth* and started singing hymns. According to the statement of Mr. H.A. Herbert, the Public Prosecutor in the Nankana Case, 'Firing started almost as soon as the Akalis entered the Gurdwara. Not a single syllable was addressed to them; they were fired upon without parley or question...'[80] Immediately 25 of the Mahant's men went atop the roof of the verandah and started firing at the Akalis sitting below. The rest of the Mahant's men and Sadhus began throwing bricks at the Sikhs, some of whom ran to take shelter in the side-rooms.[81] Others who ran to the side of the sanctuary were shot dead there. About 25 members of the Jatha who remained inside the Gurdwara calmly suffered martyrdom. About 60 of the Akalis shut themselves in another sanctuary called

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Chaukhandi but the Mahant's men broke open the doors and killed them there. Then the side-rooms were searched and 25 Akalis found there were put to death. According to contemporary accounts, Mahant Narain Das was himself supervising the whole show and urging his men 'to spare no long-haired Sikh in the whole vicinity'.[82]

After wounding and killing all the members of Bhai Lachhman Singh's party and other Jathas along with their sympathisers, the Mahant and his men collected and burnt most of the dead and wounded by pouring kerosene which had already been stored for the purpose. According to an eyewitness account, 'In these burnt heaps there were traces of arms, heads, legs and other parts of bodies chopped off into small bits... and practically the whole compound was full of blood'.[83] The Public Prosecutor also confirms the fact that 'the Mahant tried to obliterate all traces of the killed by burning the corpses'.[84] Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, in his report to the Secretary of State for India, also refers to the Mahant's attempt to burn all the dead bodies.[85]

On coming to know of the tragedy, Bhai Uttam Singh, a local factory owner, and Sardar Karam Singh, the Station Master, tried to inform the higher authorities in the Panjab as well as the Akali and the national leaders. Urgent telegrams were sent to the Lt. Governor of the Panjab, the Deputy Commissioner of Sheikhupura, the Superintendent of Police, the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and to Mahatma Gandhi.[86] Though Mr. J.C. Currie, the Deputy Commissioner, arrived at Nankana at about 12.30 p.m. he could do nothing without the assistance of the police. Curiously enough, although there were clear indications of a possible clash between the Mahant's men and the Akali reformers, the lone Sub-Inspector at the nearby police station of Warburton was on leave on the day of the tragedy. He and another Sub-Inspector from Mangatwala arrived at the scene of the tragedy only after the Deputy Commissioner had arrived.[87] According to the reports published in the native press, even after the arrival of the Deputy Commissioner, the burning of the dead and the wounded continued for about an hour and a half.[88] By late evening, Mr. C.M. King, Commissioner of Lahore Division, and the D.I.G. of Police, central Range, also reached Nankana along with 100 British and 100 Indian troops. Mahant Narain Das, with two of his henchmen and 26 Pathans, was arrested and sent to Lahore, but a large number of hooligans succeeded in escaping. The Gurdwara Janam Asthan was placed under military guard.[89]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

As mentioned earlier, Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar and his Jatha had planned the forcible occupation of the Gurdwara. But the idea had to be abandoned because of its disapproval by the Akali leadership. The cold-blooded murder of the Sikhs at Nankana greatly enraged the Akali Jathas of Lyallpur and Sheikhupura districts. The news that the Gurdwara Janam Asthan had been taken over by the army further inflamed their tempers. Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar along with his Akali Jatha was stationed at Khara Sauda when he heard of the tragedy. Through his initiative a strong force of about 2,200 Akalis was soon ready to march to Nankana and take possession of the Gurdwara. Marching at the head of his Jatha, Jhabbar was stopped on the way near village Khipwala on 21 February 1921 and served with an order from the Deputy Commissioner forbidding the Akalis to proceed towards Janam Asthan. According to the biography of the Jathedar, he tore this order into pieces in front of the very eyes of the messenger and told him to inform the Deputy Commissioner, 'I am coming with my Jatha; you may do whatever you please ...' Jhabbar and his Jathas continued their march towards Janam Asthan when they were next stopped by the Deputy Commissioner himself, who, according to the biographical account, warned the members of the Jatha that 'if they proceeded further, they will face bullets'.[90] But ignoring the warning, the Jathedar ordered his followers to march on till they reached Janam Asthan and took control of the Gurdwara. At this development, the Deputy Commissioner seems to have yielded, and after consulting the Commissioner, he agreed to hand over the keys of the Janam Asthan to Jhabbar provided the Akalis agreed to the formation of a committee of management for the Gurdwara. After some discussions, the charge of the Gurdwara was handed over to a committee consisting of seven members under the Presidentship of Sardar Harbans Singh Attari, a moderate Chief Khalsa Diwan leader.[91] After the arrest of Mahant Narain Das and the passing over of Janam Asthan to the control of a committee of management, Mahants of more than half a dozen other local Gurdwaras felt utterly demoralised. They did not offer any resistance to the Akali reformers and voluntarily surrendered their shrines to the S.G.P.C.

The most important aspect of the Nankana tragedy, i.e., its nature, official attitude and the Akali involvement in the affair warrant further detailed discussion. Next to the massacre at

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Jallianwala Bagh, the tragedy of Nankana evoked the greatest public criticism in the press and amongst the public. Apart from condemning the Mahant and his henchmen, suspicions began to be openly expressed about involvement of local officials in the tragedy.

The tragedy greatly perturbed the Sikhs in different parts of the country who vehemently condemned the action of the Mahant and sent messages of sympathy for the Akali martyrs. Resolutions were passed everywhere demanding the death penalty for the Mahant and his associates.[92] The native press was unanimous in its attack on the Mahant. Even papers opposed to the Akali leadership condemned 'the cruel and savage deed of the Nankana Mahant' and sympathised with the families of the Nankana martyrs.[93] National leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Kitchlew, Lala Duni Chand and Lala Lajpat Rai visited the scene of the tragedy and expressed sympathy for the Akalis. Prominent Sikh leaders, Members of the Panjab Legislative Council, the Sikh League, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and other Sikh organisations reached the spot.[94] In a big Shahidi Diwan held at Nankana on 3 March 1921, Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar, who had played a prominent role in taking over the keys of the Janam Asthan from the Deputy Commissioner, narrated the incident in brief and pointed out that 'the happening had awakened the Sikhs from their slumber and the march towards Swaraj had been quickened'.[95] Maulana Shaukat Ali, after making a reference to the days of martial law and the horrors perpetrated by the Government, pointed out 'how futile it was to expect justice from such a Government'.[96] In the course of his speech, he also held the Government responsible for the mischief and rebuked the Pathans for having helped the Mahant in this crime.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Nankana on 3 March to express his sympathy for the Akali Sikhs. In a Shahidi Diwan arranged on the same day, the Mahatma made a brief speech in Hindustani in the course of which he said that 'the news of Nankana was so staggering that they would not believe it without confirmation'.[97] Condemning the cruel deed of the Mahant and commending the Akalis for their passive sufferings, he described the martyrdom of the Akali reformers as an 'act of national bravery'. He also denounced the foreign Government whose rule, he said, 'was based on devilish tricks'.[98] Later, in a message to the Sikhs in Lahore, while comparing the tragedy of Nankana to a similar one in April 1919 at the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, the Mahatma said, 'Everything I saw and heard points to a second edition of Dyerism, more barbarous, more calculated and more fiendish than the Dyerism of Jallianwala.'[99] The Mahatma also advised the Akalis to offer non-cooperation in the matter of official enquiry in the Nankana tragedy and consented to serve as Chairman of the non-official Commission of Enquiry set up by the Sikh League, provided the Sikhs adopted a formal resolution affirming non-cooperation and agreed not to take recourse to the British law-courts for getting the murderers punished.[100]

Now that the facts and figures of the Nankana tragedy are available to researchers, it has become easier to expose the double-standards that the bureaucracy adopted in this matter. On the one hand the Mahant of Nankana was being secretly helped and encouraged to prepare for what the officials described as 'self-defence' and on the other, sympathy was being expressed for the objects of the movement of Gurdwara reform. It was this policy of the Panjab Government that was chiefly responsible for the unfortunate happening at Nankana. On going through the contents of Mr. C.M. King's letter to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi,[101] his Personal Explanation to the Panjab Legislative Council, various intelligence reports and the lengthy correspondence between the Government of the Panjab and India on the one hand and the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on the other, one is led to believe that the massacre of the Akalis at Nankana was a well-planned and pre-meditated conspiracy and the Government officials were not only in the know, but were actively backing the Mahant. In the course of his Personal Explanation in the Council, Mr. King said, 'It is true to say that some months before the occurrence of the 20th February—ever since the beginning of October in fact—the air has been full of vague rumours of attack on the Nankana on the 4th, 5th and 6th March ...'[102] He also admitted that Mr. Currie and other officials under him had been passing the correct information on the subject to him. Moreover, weekly and fortnightly reports which were sent by the local officials to the higher authorities also point to the growing tension at Nankana and elsewhere in the Panjab. One of the reports describes the situation in the province during the week ending 15 February 1921, just six days before the tragedy:

> The Akali Dal movement to obtain possession of all Sikh Gurdwaras is gaining force and several Gurdwaras have been

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

taken over by the new party. The visit of an Akali Dal to Tarn Taran on the 26th January resulted in a serious riot between the Akalis and the Pujaris ... several persons on both sides were wounded ...[103]

An earlier report about the Nankana fair in November 1920, ran as follows :

A great assault by the extremists on the Nankana shrine was expected on the occasion of the annual fair, but the Mahants were prepared and everything passed off quietly...[104]

Information given in the second report is also confirmed by Mr. King himself when, in his attempt to justify the actions of Mr. Currie, he said that at a big fair at the end of November 1920, Currie's presence and exertions averted what might have been even a worse tragedy than what actually happened on 20 February 1921. If the Mahant was prepared to face a 'worse tragedy' earlier in November 1920, there were all the more reasons to expect a bigger clash in February 1921, when the climate was charged with tension and the Mahant had further strengthened his preparations. But the authorities failed to heed the warning from the mounting tension at Nankana and the bloodshed at Tarn Taran on 26 January 1921. There is further evidence to show that at least two private citizens also informed Mr. King about the Mahant's preparations.

The veracity of the 'vague rumours', as Mr. King described numerous reports of the large-scale preparation of Mahant Narain Das, was confirmed when he paid a personal visit to Nankana towards the end of January 1921. Though he saw these preparations and even fortifications, he attempted to justify these by suggesting that they were intended for defence against attack from outside. This justification of the Mahant's actions by the custodian of law and order of an important Division of the Panjab and his statement that 'all fair-minded persons would admit that they were perfectly legitimate' can only be taken to mean that illegal large-scale possession of pistols, rifles, cartridges, etc., was also within the orbit of law, and so, perhaps, was the manufacture, in the Gurdwara compound, of swords, daggers, chhavis, and other lethal weapons.

That Mr. King and his subordinates not only knew about the Mahant's preparations but also encouraged him to make them is

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

borne out by the statement which Mahant Narain Das made before the court, 'I was told by the Commissioner and other responsible Government officials that this was a religious matter and *I was told to make my own arrangements*'.[105] This belief is further confirmed by the letter of Mr. King stating that 'any person who attempts to eject forcibly any Mahant or any other person holding rights in a shrine is liable to punishment under Criminal Law',[106] and further advised that where 'in spite of precautions or without precaution he is ejected from the shrine he can sue for recovery of his rights and also bring criminal proceedings...'[107] Justifying the issuing of this letter he said, 'The letter which I issued was written in the hope that Jathas would recognize that they were acting contrary to law and would restrain themselves.'[108] The letter was not intended, as Mr. King suggested, merely to warn the Jathas that they were acting contrary to the law but, in fact, served as a great source of encouragement and moral support to the Mahants of Nankana and other places. The letter did not merely inform the Mahants of the legal remedies, but also indirectly advised them to resist the movement of reform and brought home to them the fact that the law or, at any rate Mr. King, was on their side. Had Mr. King not addressed this letter to the Mahants and justified Narain Das's preparations, perhaps, the latter would have compromised with the Akali leadership and agreed to serve under the S.G.P.C. as the Mahants of other smaller shrines had done.

Equally responsible was Mr. King for his failure to make adequate police arrangements at Nankana. Though he admitted that after his visit to Nankana he 'felt the risk of a collision was increasing' and knew that a big Diwan was to take place on 4-6 March, he did not arrange for the establishment of a police post or to ensure sufficient reserves to be rushed to Nankana in case of emergency. On the other hand, when the Mahant demanded police protection in December 1920, he was refused the same on the ground that the Government did not wish to interfere in religious affairs and was told to 'make his own arrangements'.[109] Again, when in January 1921, the Mahant sent a telegram to the Deputy Superintendent of Police of Gujranwala informing the authorities of the Akalis' forcible possession of Darbar Sahib and requesting immediate help, the authorities did not take any action in the matter. While delivering his judgement in the Akali v. C.M. King Defamation Case, the judge fixed the responsibility on Mr. King when he

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

observed, 'The plea that the police was not available is ridiculous. No Government could be worthy of the trust which could not help keep an eye on the doings of its people.'[110]

It appears that the British officials in the Panjab were playing a double game. On the one hand they did not wish to lose the goodwill of the Sikh community and therefore, followed a policy of 'non-interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs' and on the other, they did not want to withdraw themselves from the direct or indirect control of the Gurdwaras. Under the circumstances, the policy of local officials, i.e., secretly encouraging the Mahants to offer tough resistance to the Akalis and outwardly professing 'sympathy' with the movement of reform, promised best results. It appears from the above facts about the tragedy that the officials wanted the growing movement of the Akalis to be crushed through the Mahants and thus to save themselves from incurring the displeasure of the Sikh community. Hence, the lower-level officials not only allowed the Mahant to prepare himself to meet the growing movement but secretly encouraged and patronised him wishing him success in his mission.

But this policy of the Government and the failure of the local officials to take precautionary measures to avert the tragedy became a subject of severe criticism both in the Executive Council of the Viceroy of India and in the office of the Secretary of State for India in London. In a letter addressed to Lord Reading, the then Viceroy, Mr. E.S. Montague, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, criticised the official action with regard to the Sikh situation and observed that 'the Government action comes after the trouble and not in anticipation of it....'[111] The Viceroy, during his perusal of the Mahant's appeal, remarked, 'I am concerned to note the written statement of the Mahant, which, if accepted, indicates that he only resorted to the incitement of violence after making representations and appeals to the local authorities for protection...' He further observed that 'the inference to be drawn, namely, that had police protection been given this whole-sale massacre would not have taken place'.[112] The Panjab Government did its best to justify the inaction of the local officials on the plea that this was done 'with a view to avoiding any semblance of partiality towards one or the other of the two religious groups and more especially with a view to avoiding action that might drive the Sikhs generally, who had as a body, behaved most loyally during the War, into

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

anything like opposition to the Government'.[113] But this and other arguments did not convince the Viceroy and other members of his Council. In a letter dated 6 June 1922, S.P. O'Donnell expressed the dissatisfaction of the Government of India with the policy of the local Government, 'The explanation offered, however, of the action or rather inaction of the Panjab Government is entirely unconvincing.'[114] Other members of the Council equally condemned the policy of the Panjab Government and the inaction of its district level officials. In a note dated 17 June 1922, L. Graham observed, 'The District Magistrate and his superior officers appear to have overlooked the primary duty of the executive to maintain the peace....' He further remarked, 'The Tragedy would have been averted if the Panjab Government had, in consequence of the information received by it, taken proper steps for the preservation of peace...'[115]

But the most tragic part of the whole story is that in spite of this strong criticism of the action of the local officials and their responsibility for the tragedy of Nankana having been established, neither did the Viceroy of India nor any other member of his Executive Council ask the Government of the Panjab to take any action against the concerned officials. On the other hand, noticing that the reluctance on the part of the Government to clarify the position of its lower officials was causing controversy and disgracing the bureaucracy, the Council members suggested to the authorities in the Panjab that prior to the institution of legal proceedings against the Mahant and his men, the concerned British officials should be exonerated. It was also suggested that repeated statements should be issued that these officials were not guilty of neglect of duty and that they had been keeping the Government informed of the up to date developments about the Gurdwara reform movement.[116]

Following this advice of the Government of India, the Home Member of the Panjab Government made repeated statements in the Panjab Legislative Council supporting the action of the local officials. Thus, while C.M. King tried to justify the action of the subordinate officers, his own action in addressing a letter to the Mahants and holding meetings with them was justified by his superior, Sir John Maynard, the Home Member, Panjab, declaring that 'the object of the letter to which reference is made by the questioner, was merely to inform the Mahants of their legal remedies in the event of illegal attempts being made to dispossess them... The letter

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

contains nothing to which exception can reasonably be taken...' Similarly, when a question was asked in the Panjab Legislative Council about the inaction of the police officials and the C.I.D., Sir John Maynard fully justified the role of the concerned officials.[117] Consequently, the Panjab Government exonerated the guilty officials.

Though outwardly the authorities in the Panjab and the higher bureaucracy in Delhi were united with regard to their stand on the Akali Movement, a careful perusal of the secret notes in the Government of India files indicates that there was a serious difference of opinion. The Panjab Government's policy with regard to the Akali Movement was not approved of by the Viceroy in the Council, who complained that the Government of India was never consulted in the matter.

The Nankana tragedy and the inaction of the local officials and indirect responsibility of the local Government made the higher authorities in Delhi and London think that there was an urgent need to change the earlier 'policy of non-interference in the religious affairs of the minority community'. The Government of India's criticism that 'the difficulty was largely the failure of the Panjab Government to deal with the Akali Movement firmly and consistently from the beginning', provided the authorities in the Panjab with the much needed handle to initiate the new policy of (i) weakening the growing Akali agitation with promises of 'suitable legislation' and (ii) suppressing the extremists in the Akali leadership under the pretext of maintaining law and order. It was the implementation of this new policy which resulted in direct confrontation between the bureaucracy, supported by the Mahants, priests and other vested interests on the one hand and the Sikh masses and Akali leadership backed by the Indian National Congress and other nationalist forces in the country on the other.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

3

Struggle against the Government

The Nankana tragedy and the subsequent policy of repression initiated by the Panjab Government proved a turning point in the brief history of the Akali Movement and also the British Government's policy towards the Sikhs. The local officials' support to Narain Das and other Mahants, their responsibility for the massacre of the Akalis at Nankana and the judicial machinery's attempts to protect the vested interests convinced the Akali leadership that the Government was for its own obvious reasons backing the vested interests. Realising that it was not possible to oust the corrupt and undesirable Mahants and other priests till the Government was compelled to give up its support for them, the Akalis broadened the scope of their initial struggle for Gurdwara reform. After ensuring active cooperation and support from the nationalist press, the Indian National Congress and other nationalist forces in the country, the Akalis launched a two-pronged struggle directed against the Mahants, priests and other vested interests in the Sikh shrines on the one hand and against their supporter, the British Government in the Panjab on the other. Under the new programme of non-violent non-cooperation which received the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders, Akali struggle against a foreign Government became a synonym for struggle for reform in the Sikh shrines. Akali agitation over the Keys' Affair and later their struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh are two important manifestations of a popular

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

movement in the province backed by the forces of nationalism in the country.

The Keys Affair

The Golden Temple, the Akal Takhat and the adjoining Gurdwaras in Amritsar had passed into the control of the Akalis in October 1920. Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia, the Government-appointed Manager of the Golden Temple, was holding the office of Secretary of the new Committee of Management appointed by the S.G.P.C. Realising the force of public opinion, he decided to fall in line with the party of reform.[1] Though the S.G.P.C. and the Committee appointed by it virtually controlled the affairs of the Golden Temple, the fact that the keys of the Toshakhana were still in the possession of a Government-appointed Manager gave the reformers the feeling of continued Government control over the Gurdwaras. At its meeting held on 29 October 1921, the Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. asked Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia to hand over the keys to Sardar Kharak Singh, the President of the S.G.P.C. Even before the resolution was made public, the news reached the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar who decided to forestall the manoeuvre by immediately sending Lala Amar Nath, an Extra Assistant Commissioner, accompanied by a police party to Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia to collect the keys of the Toshakhana. The latter handed over a bunch of 53 keys to him and obtained a formal receipt.

A period of intense agitation followed the surrender of the keys. The Panjab press, particularly the pro-Akali newspapers, reacted very sharply. While censuring the Government for taking over the keys of the Golden Temple, the *Panth Sewak* wrote, 'What right has a foreign Government to interfere in the affairs of the Gurdwaras?'[2] *The Akali* expressed its resentment in the following manner: 'On the one hand the keys of the temple have been taken away and on the other the bureaucracy has crossed all limits in telling lies....'[3] *Bande Matram* came out with very interesting comments: 'It is like a person filing an application in the Court that he has stolen the property of another and asking the Court to direct the latter to get back the same....'[4]

Criticism in the press was followed by public condemnation

of the official action in various parts of the Panjab. According to the report of a C.I.D. official:

> Jathas from different parts of the Panjab reached Amritsar on the 11th of November.... A meeting was organised in the evening in the Bagh Akalian to protest against the action of the Deputy Commissioner. Sardar Kharak Singh and Jaswant Singh delivered violent speeches. The non-co-operators dominated the affairs and others were not allowed to speak....[5]

In another meeting at the Akal Takhat on the same day, the S.G.P.C. decided not to allow the newly appointed Sarbrah, Honorary Captain Bahadur Singh, to interfere in the affairs of the Golden Temple in any way.[6] At another protest meeting held at Lahore on 12 November 1921 the action of the Government was criticised and the Sikh members of Legislative Council were asked to vacate their seats.[7] Protest meetings were also held at Gujranwala. Gujar Khan and other places.[8] As a mark of protest it was decided not to illuminate the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras on the occasion of the birthday of Guru Nanak on 15 November 1921.[9] According to a C.I.D. note, 'orders were issued from the Akal Takhat asking the Sikh soldiers to give up service and some of them had agreed to abide by the instructions of the Akali leadership.'[10]

Overwhelmed by the deluge of protest and indignation engulfing the central districts of the Panjab and facing the danger of its undermining the loyalty of Sikh troops in the Indian Army, the Government of India advised the authorities in the Panjab that the only way to counter the movement of non-cooperation among the Sikhs was, 'to successfully prosecute five or six leading men, especially Dan Singh and Jaswant Singh.'[11] In compliance with these instructions, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar arrested these leaders of the non-cooperation movement while they were addressing a Sikh Diwan at Ajnala on 26 November 1921 on the plea that 'they were discussing a "political question" which had been prohibited under Seditious Meetings Act.'[12] According to *The Akali*, 'the two leaders, Sardar Dan Singh and Sardar Jaswant Singh, were arrested and handcuffed even before they could deliver any speech.'[13]

The Akali reaction was immediate. As soon as the news of these arrests reached Amritsar, the S.G.P.C., which was in session at the Akal Takhat, adjourned its meeting to Ajnala. Soon, more

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

than 50 members reached Ajnala and continued the proceedings of the Diwan.[14] The authorities declared the assembly illegal and immediately arrested all its members.[15] However, the arrests, instead of checking the advance of the movement gave it a fresh fillip. The S.G.P.C., by a resolution, called upon the Sikhs 'to hold religious Diwans everywhere to explain the facts about the Keys Affair.'[16] The resolution further advised the Sikhs to observe hartal on the day of the arrival of the Prince of Wales on Indian shores.[17] Further, Sikh soldiers and pensioners were asked not to attend any of the functions in honour of the Prince.[18] The boycott move of the Akali leadership seems to have frightened the authorities in the Panjab to such an extent that they decided to cancel the scheduled visit of the Prince to Amritsar.[19]

Meanwhile, more arrests were made. Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal, acting President of the S.G.P.C., Master Tara Singh, Jaswant Singh, Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhai Tara Singh and Bhai Kartar Singh soon found themselves behind bars for having discussed the prohibited 'Keys' issue.[20] The movement became intense when the arrested leaders, who refused to put up any defence on the plea that they were non-cooperators, were convicted and awarded rigorous punishments.[21]

Official action in arresting the Akali leaders and awarding them rigorous sentences and fines greatly added to the popularity of the movement. Reports of the C.I.D. officials that 'the agitation was spreading fast to the rural areas of the Sikh districts of the Panjab, particularly Lahore and Amritsar',[22] combined with similar reports from the military authorities of the serious effects on Sikh troops seem to have disturbed the authorities who started devising a method to get out of the difficult situation. Along with the suppression of the popular movement, the Government also tried to solve the complicated questions of the 'Keys'. When it realised that no Sikh was prepared to accept the office of the Sarbrah at the hands of the Government, it thought of appointing a committee of a few moderate Sikhs.[23] But in the face of mass and determined opposition from the Sikhs, even the moderates dared not accept the official offer. The S.G.P.C. passed a resolution on 6 December 1921 that 'no Sikh should agree to any arrangement about the restoration of the keys unless and until all the Sikhs arrested in connection with the Keys Affair are released unconditionally'.[24] According to Mahatma Gandhi, the Government in the Panjab was in a real

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

dilemma:

> If it releases the Sikhs it would be ridiculed and the strength of the Sikhs will increase two-fold. If it does not release them their strength will increase ten-fold. It must, therefore, decide whether it should be wiser for it to allow the Sikhs' strength to increase ten times or to release the Sikh prisoners and be laughed at taking consolation in the fact that the strength of Sikhs will then only be doubled.[25]

To get out of the dilemma the Government began showing anxiety to negotiate with the leaders of the movement with a view to find a solution.[26] The resulting discussions having been satisfactorily concluded, a communique appeared on 12 January 1922 stating:

> the Government has accordingly decided to make a final withdrawal of its connection as Executive Government with the management of the Durbar Sahib and to leave any further proceedings that may be thought necessary to the Sikh community itself. So far as the Government is concerned it is prepared to leave the administration as it now stands, in the hands of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and to allow the keys to be given over at once to that Committee....[27]

And on 17 January 1922, all those arrested in connection with the agitation over the Keys Affair were released unconditionally. When even after securing the unconditional release of the prisoners, the Akali leadership refused to collect the keys from the District Magistrate, a gazetted officer of the Panjab Government was sent to deliver the keys to Baba Kharak Singh, President of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee in a Diwan specially arranged for the purpose.[28]

The unconditional release of the Akali prisoners and surrender of the keys to Baba Kharak Singh has been described by a contemporary European writer in the following manner:

> Never was there a more shameful defeat. One thinks irresistibly of the capture of Calais by an English King when the leading citizens had to bring the keys to him clothed only in their

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

shirts and with ropes round their necks.... The Panjab Government had humbled itself to the dust before the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee....[29]

The defeat of the Government was viewed by the nationalist leaders in the country, who had been backing the Akalis in their struggle against the bureaucracy, as a decisive victory for the forces of nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi sent the following telegram to Baba Kharak Singh:

'First battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations.'[30]

In its anxiety not to alienate the Sikhs any further or to allow their movement to gain momentum as a result of repressive measures, the Government seems to have made a virtual surrender to the Akalis. In its efforts to win back the Sikhs, the Government changed its earlier stand. The actions of the leaders of the movement, whom the judicial machinery had sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 'political activities', were now explained away as due to 'excitement based on the action taken by the Government in respect of the Darbar Sahib rather than due to a desire to join in any campaign of disobedience to the law'.[31] In the light of the statements given by the Akali leaders earlier at the time of their prosecution, the changed official version appears rather ridiculous. These leaders had more than once proclaimed that 'they were non-co-operators and were not prepared to offer any defence as they had no regard for a foreign Government, its Courts and the law'.[32] The extract from Baba Kharak Singh's statement in the court makes this stand crystal-clear:

> As the Government is a party to this prosecution and the Judge is one of its servants, I, therefore, do not wish to make any statement. My position as President of the Sikh Panth is like that of the Presidents of the United States, France and Germany.[33]

That the whole Sikh community was expressing its feelings of hatred for foreign rule through its struggle for the reform of Gurdwaras is borne out by the statements of other Akali leaders. Perusal of these statements shows that anti-British feelings dominated the political scene in those days. In the course of their statements in the court, these leaders made the following significant remarks:

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

> I have no regards for the present Government, nor do I consider these courts as places of justice as they belong to a Government which is mad under the intoxication of power....[34] (Dan Singh)

Sardar Dan Singh had the courage to tell the judicial authorities that the justice administered in the courts was arbitrary when he stated at the end of the above-mentioned statement '...announce to us the sentence which you have already decided in the club a day earlier'.[35]

It seems that in administering justice the judiciary was merely implementing the predetermined decisions of the executive based on political expediency. Other leaders also defied the law in a similar fashion:

> I do not consider this court as a place of justice nor do I expect any justice from the British Government.... Making a statement is useless.[36] (Bhag Singh, Pleader)

and again

> There is no Government, no justice and hence no statement.[37] (Master Sunder Singh)

It was this spirit of defiance that was working behind the movement of Gurdwara reform launched by the Akalis and behind their struggle against the authority of the British Government. A careful perusal of the statements reveals how the awe of the constituted authority, its officials, judges and police had disappeared from the minds of the people in the province. Attempts of the Government to win back the Sikhs failed. The hope expressed in the communique that 'the cordial relations which have hitherto been maintained between the Government and the Sikhs may continue uninterrupted for the perpetual benefit of the Government and the community', proved a far cry. Professions of 'goodwill and friendliness' could no longer lure the Akali leadership which had travelled a long way from 'unfailing loyalty and staunch support' to 'open defiance of authority'. The community had awakened from slumber and its religious places could no longer be misused either for the pleasure and profits of the Mahants or for strengthening the hands of a foreign Government. No saropas could now be offered to the Prince of Wales and no prayers held for his well-being. Even his scheduled

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

visit to Amritsar had to be cancelled and the receptions arranged in his honour at Lahore and other places were boycotted.[38]

Struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh

The Akali struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh[39] is another landmark in the history of the Akali Movement and the movement of non-violent non-cooperation in the country. It was here that the Akalis were able to demonstrate the efficacy of the weapon of peaceful satyagraha by their strict adherence to the vow of non-violence and thus set a new example to inspire the forces of nationalism in the country. Their firm faith shook the authorities whose immoral use of power was exposed by the patient sufferings of peaceful Akalis.

The Gurdwara reform movement acquired national dimensions and a new meaning when at Guru-ka-Bagh the repressive policies of the Government met with firm resistance by people inspired by the ideal of non-violent satyagraha. The Guru-ka-Bagh struggle was made an 'issue' by the Government of the Panjab whose dummy Mahant became a mere tool in the hands of the British officials for the execution of the new policy of repression resorted to by the Government to retrieve the prestige it had lost with the Akali victory in the agitation over the 'Keys Affair'.

Sunder Das, the Mahant of Guru-ka-Bagh, kept mistresses and indulged in immoral practices.[40] When the Gurdwara reform movement gained momentum and the Golden Temple and other important Gurdwaras had come under the control of the S.G.P.C., the attention of the Akali reformers was drawn towards Guru-ka-Bagh.

On 31 January 1921, some Sikhs under the leadership of Sardar Dan Singh went to Guru-ka-Bagh with a view to persuading the Mahant to improve his ways and reach an understanding with the reformers.[41] The Mahant, yielding to the pressure, signed an agreement on terms dictated by the Akalis and agreed to serve under a Committee of Management consisting of 11 members appointed by the S.G.P.C.[42]

After the Nankana tragedy and the repressive policy of the Panjab Government, this Mahant, like many others, went back on his promise

and relapsed into evil ways. On noticing the change in the Mahant's attitude the S.G.P.C. took over the management of the Gurdwara on 23 August 1921 while the land attached to the shrine continued to remain in the possession of the Mahant.[43] He tried to regain the possession of the Gurdwara through the intercession of local officials but failed. He therefore had to re-enter into a compromise with the Akalis.[44] But this new compromise was also not destined to last long; not because of the Mahant but as a result of the policy of the Panjab Government with regard to the Akali Movement.

As stated earlier, the Panjab Government wanted some excuse or the other to implement the new policy towards the Akali Movement which had been decided by the higher authorities in Delhi. A convenient issue was found in what was otherwise a very insignificant incident of felling a dry *kikkar* tree by the Akalis on the land attached to the Gurdwara. According to the official statement: 'The Mahant complained to the police of the theft of his property from his land.'[45] It is strange that a dry kikkar tree was described as 'property' to enable the Mahant to lodge a complaint with the local police. Moreover, ever since the occupation of the Gurdwara by the Akalis, wood from the land attached to it had been used for the community kitchen and the Mahant had not previously raised any objection.[46] Therefore, using this minor incident as an excuse, the authorities arrested five Akalis on 9 August 1922 and put them on trial.[47] They were convicted of theft by Mr. Ivan Jenkins, a first-class Magistrate of Amritsar, and were sentenced to six months' imprisonment and to a fine of Rs. 50 each. According to the S.G.P.C. communiques and the version of the incident by some contemporaries such as Teja Singh, Ruchi Ram Sahni and Sohan Singh Josh, the Akalis were arrested not on the complaint of the Mahant, but under orders from Mr. J.M. Dunnett, the District Magistrate of Amritsar. This was on the basis of the confidential diary of Bedi Brij Lal, a Zaildar of village Mahilawala.[48] It was on the day after the arrests, when Mr. Beaty, the Additional Superintendent of Police, accompanied by other police officials, reached Guru-ka-Bagh that the complaint of Mahant Sunder Das was obtained in support of a step which had already been decided.[49]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

It seems that the official action against the Akalis in anticipation of a formal complaint from the Mahant was in keeping with the instructions issued to Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners in the Panjab by the Home Secretary.[50] On the face of it, the incident was too insignificant to become an issue for a long-drawn struggle and a trial of strength between the powerful machinery of the Panjab Government, backed by the Government of India, and the peaceful Akalis, supported by the force of country-wide nationalism and public opinion in India.

As pointed out earlier, in the complaint of Mahant Sunder Das about the 'theft of his property' the authorities in the Panjab found a convenient excuse to implement their new policy of suppressing the Akali Movement by force. The action of the local authorities in instituting criminal proceedings against the Akalis for cutting wood from the land attached to the Guru-ka-Bagh was seen by the Akali leadership as a fresh challenge. To protest against the oficial high-handedness and to assert their right to chop wood for the free community kitchen, Jathas of five volunteers each started marching towards Guru-ka-Bagh. A new wave of enthusiasm spread among the Akalis in different parts of the province which soon encouraged Akali Jathas from the surrounding areas to pour into Guru-ka-Bagh to help in the cutting and storing of wood for the Gurdwara kitchen. The police remained inactive to begin with; they were perhaps awaiting fresh instructions to deal with this serious turn of events. Then on 22 August 1922, large-scale arrests of the Akalis commenced. As the wood-cutting continued, all those reaching the Guru-ka-Bagh were arrested on charges of riot, theft and trespassing. By 25 August 1922, the number of Akalis arrested there rose to 210. The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, who had earlier gone to Simla to discuss the situation with the higher authorities, returned with new plans for tackling the situation. It seems that the local Government had realised that the arrests and the long sentences could not overawe the Akalis, whose number, according to official estimates, had swelled to 4,000 by 28 August. Noticing that the arrests of such large numbers of volunteers would create problems, a new method of dispersing the Akalis by force was adopted instead.

To check the continued influx of Akali Jathas and their supporters and sympathizers, police pickets were placed on all the roads leading to Guru-ka-Bagh. Arrangements were also made to prevent the Jathas from reaching Amritsar by rail or by road. By an order of

Mr. J.M. Dunnett, the District Magistrate of Amritsar, the Akāli gatherings at Guru-ka-Bagh were declared unlawful assemblies. Also, consignors and carriers rushing supplies to them were warned that 'they were engaged in the commission of a cognizable offence under Section 143/109 of Indian Penal Code' and were prevented from doing so under Section 149 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The District Magistrate also directed the police picket commanders at Ranewala and Chhinawala bridges on the Lahore branch of the Upper Bari Doab 'to prevent the transmission of such supplies to the illegal assemblies at Guru-ka-Bagh'.[51] Following this directive the police officials started seizing all the provisions and medical supplies being sent by the S.G.P.C. and other welfare associations to Guru-ka-Bagh for the use of the wounded Akalis there.

In spite of these preventive measures, Akalis continued to pour into Amritsar, and Jathas consisting of 55, 60, 100 and sometimes even 200 Akalis marched to Guru-ka-Bagh daily after taking a vow of non-violence at Akal Takhat, Amritsar. According to contemporary Akali sources, these Jathas were usually stopped by groups of police officials and beaten with sticks in order to disable them from proceeding towards the garden.[52] Undeterred by the police beatings, the Jathas continued to march towards Guru-ka-Bagh. On the evening of 29 August 1922, a Jatha of 50 Akalis started from Akal Takhat but was stopped at Ranewala Bridge and on its refusal to disperse, its members were placed under nominal arrest and kept there. Another Jatha of 50 arrived the next day whereupon both Jathas were allowed to cross the bridge under a heavy shower of lathi blows. As a result of the beating, 30 injured members of the Jatha had to be left behind, some of them 'in very serious condition'.[53] They were later taken to Amritsar for treatment. Another Jatha of 60 Akalis which left Akal Takhat on 31 August was overtaken by the police during the night at the Chhina Bridge 'where the members were attacked by Mr. Beaty and his policemen with lathis and more than half of them were rendered unconscious'.[54] The next day another Jatha of 120 members was surrounded by foot and mounted police near the Gumtala Bridge and dispersed by the use of severe force.

The increasing use of force on the Akali Jathas in the face of their totally non-violent approach had a great impact on the general public in the Panjab and outside. The S.G.P.C. appealed to men of independent opinion, journalists and national leaders

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

'to come and watch the non-violent spiritual struggle that was going on at Guru-ka-Bagh to obviate the possibility of misrepresentation at the hands of clever bureaucracy'.[55] Several national leaders, Hindu and Muslim, members of the Legislative Council and press representatives converged on Guru-ka-Bagh. The reports of the pressmen and the Akali leaders' press statements on their arrest earlier (on 25 August 1922) when published in various newspapers in India and England aroused public opinion against the high-handed and brutal policy of the Government. Prominent leaders and workers of the Congress and the Khilafat movements reached Amritsar. On 10 September, the Akali Diwan at Amritsar was attended by Swami Shardhanand, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Kifayat Ullah, Kumari Lajawanti and Sayed Atta Ullah Shah. All of them who addressed the Jathas, assured the Akali leadership of the support of the Hindus and Muslims.[56] In this Diwan an American cinematographer, Capt. A.L. Verges, was also present, who later filmed the beatings of the Akalis at the Guru-ka-Bagh and produced a short film entitled 'Exclusive Picture of India's Martyrdom'. He described the Akali morchas at Guru-ka-Bagh as 'A unique struggle in human history and a peaceful rebellion against the constituted authority'.[57]

In another public meeting held at Jallianwala Bagh on 10 September under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya which was attended by more than 13,000 persons including nearly 1,000 women and 5,000 Akalis, action of the police at Guru-ka-Bagh was severely criticised. In the course of his speech Pandit Malaviya declared that 'it is the duty of every Indian to express hatred and contempt for the actions of the Government and raise unanimous voice to demand a change of policy'.[58] Resolutions were passed expressing hatred of, and contempt for, the oppressive, inhuman and uncivilised treatment meted out to the Akalis and demanding an immediate end to this policy. Protests of C.F. Andrews,[59] a Christian missionary, who described the official action as 'inhuman, brutal, foul, cowardly and incredible to an Englishman and a moral defeat of England',[60] and who later, during his meeting with the Governor of the Panjab, told him that he had seen with his own eyes hundreds of Christs being crucified at Guru-ka-Bagh,[61] might have had some effect in compelling the local authorities for serious rethinking. Confidential reports regarding the ruthlessness

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of the police officials at the Guru-ka-Bagh in which some respectable people of independent opinion, members of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and press representatives were also jostled, chased and given blows with sticks, made the authorities realise that apart from the bad name which the Government had earned in the press in and outside India, the action was likely to alienate the moderate element in the Sikh community. All these factors forced the Government to contemplate a change in the method of operating against the Akalis—the object still remaining the same, i.e., to suppress the movement and to break the Akali organisation. In a confidential note dated 9 September 1922, H.V.B. Hare Scott wrote, 'This beating has proved ineffective and it has been decided to stop it. Mr. Tollton is leaving for Amritsar today to devise other means of dealing with the situation'.[62]

On 13 September 1922, the Governor of Panjab, accompanied by other Members of his Executive Council, visited Amritsar and later proceeded to Guru-ka-Bagh where he inspected all the arrangements. On his return a conference of the Members of the Government and the local officers was held where 'it was decided that the method of forcibly repelling the intruders should be discontinued'.[63] That public opinion had played an important role in compelling the Government to change its policy is borne out by the following extract from the Government statement regarding Guru-ka-Bagh:

> There is also no doubt that these stories and the sight of these injuries have excited a large measure of sympathy for the Akalis on the part of loyal and moderate Sikhs and other persons not generally in sympathy with the Akali movement.[64]

Equally important were factors like the growing sympathy for the Akalis in the neighbouring villages and the reported 'attempts to create excitement in Sikh units of the Indian Army'. The fact that the Sikh Jathas going to Guru-ka-Bagh contained a fairly large number of ex-soldiers greatly alarmed the authorities.

But the change in policy should not be taken to mean that the authorities were in any way interested in coming to terms with the Akali leadership and were prepared to pass a Bill for Gurdwara management to its satisfaction. In fact the change was merely tactical; the object was still the same—suppression of the agitation. The authorities were waiting for another suitable oppor-

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

tunity to strike hard. The officials devised a strategy using the excellent rainfall which the districts of Central Panjab had. In the meantime District-level officials reported that the Sikh peasantry, which was the backbone of the Akali Movement, would no longer be able to stay away from the fields during the sowing season which would thus leave the Akali leadership in the lurch with depleted forces.[65] Equally optimistic were the reports of the C.I.D. officials that 'the Committee is also finding it difficult to feed the large number of Akalis gathered in Amritsar and has decided to reduce the numbers.

The local Government also held the opinion that apart from the above-mentioned factors, which were likely to weaken the movement, future official action at a remote place like Guru-ka-Bagh[66] (three or four kilometers away from the main road) would be 'far less spectacular than the forcible dispersal of Jathas on a metalled road only a few kilometers away from the city of Amritsar and the absence of crowds of sympathising spectators, press-reporters and photographers, would diminish the zeal of the would-be martyrs'.[67] But the events which followed soon after showed how erroneous the official machinery was in its calculations.

The Government resumed the earlier method of arrests with the addition that now the Akalis were severely beaten up before their arrest. Under the new arrangements police pickets blocking the road to Guru-ka-Bagh were strengthened and the army was called in to assist the police in case of emergency. Long barbed wire entanglements were also erected around the place under dispute, leaving only one narrow passage to serve both entrance and exit.[68] According to an eyewitness: 'It was an elaborate arrangement with a base about ten feet in breadth and tapered to a point which was considerably higher than the tallest man.'[69]

While the Government and the Akali leadership were busy discussing terms for a settlement, Jathas of Akalis continued marching to Guru-ka-Bagh to establish their right to cut wood. By this time, the policemen on duty there had been specially drilled and trained in administering lathi blows on the private parts as well as on the feet and legs of the Akalis and a special booklet, *The Lathi and how to use it*, had been prepared for their use.[70] According to a statement of press representatives and other eye-witnesses, the beating of the Akalis at Guru-ka-Bagh was done in a most merciless and brutal manner.[71] Even the confidential notes of the C.I.D. mention

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

that 'some lathi blows were given about the private parts of the Akalis, that this done with considerable force and intentionally, and that the *keshas* of the Akalis were pulled'.[72] This new technique of beating the Akalis, which seems to have made a special appeal to Mr. Beaty, the police officer in charge of the operations at Guru-ka-Bagh, was continued for about a fortnight.

But these measures did not discourage the Akalis who continued to march towards Guru-ka-Bagh in ever-increasing numbers. Arrests and beatings could no longer deter them and jails held no terror for them. The Akali Jathas vied with each other for precedence to proceed to Guru-ka-Bagh.[73] The reports of the C.I.D. officials and the old registers in the Panjab State Archives at Patiala containing details about the Akalis proceeding to Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito confirm the S.G.P.C.'s claim that the number of Akalis offering themselves for arrest was on the increase.[74] According to an official report, the number on 24-25 September had gone up to 80 a day. Even so, interestingly enough, the bureaucracy at Delhi was trying to belittle the effect of the movement by sending telegrams to the Secretary of State for India stating that the S.G.P.C. was finding it difficult to attract sufficient number of volunteers to court arrest at Guru-ka-Bagh.[75]

While the struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh continued unabated, a high-level conference was called on 3 October 1922 at the Viceregal Lodge, Simla. It was attended by the Viceroy and the Governor of the Panjab and Members of their respective Councils.[76] The most important item on the agenda was the policy of the Panjab Government vis-a-vis the 'existing Sikh situation'. The reports which the Government of India had received were conflicting. Some indicated that the supply of volunteers was almost unlimited, while others stated that it was drying up. According to official figures the total number of arrested Akalis had gone up to 8,000; the jails in the Panjab could accommodate only another 900 persons.[77] The Governor informed the Viceroy that 'with the stoppage of beating of the Akalis a good deal of excitement over Guru-ka-Bagh had subsided'. He also informed the Viceroy that efforts to bring about a compromise between the Mahant and the Akalis had failed and the Deputy Commissioner had been asked if he could arrange for a Sikh to sue for a declaratory decree that those in occupation of the Gurdwara were entitled to cut wood on the Mahant's land.[78]

This last suggestion by the Governor shows that the Government had realised that it was difficult to suppress the growing Akali

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Movement by mass arrests. The experiment in dispersal had failed earlier and could not be revived. The Government found itself in a difficult situation indeed; it was now on the look-out for some face-saving device to extricate itself from the mess. In these circumstances the only way open to it was to pass a fresh Gurdwara Bill and thereby put an end to the struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh. But no legislative measure could be successful without the cooperation of the S.G.P.C. and other Akali leaders who refused to extend any support to such official effort till the release of all the Akali prisoners arrested in connection with the Guru-ka-Bagh.[79]

Outwardly, the Government was busy making announcements that the jail officials had been asked to make arrangements for 5,000 to 10,000 more Akalis, though it was inwardly perturbed at the increasing number of Akali prisoners. Severe beating at Guru-ka-Bagh was intended to discourage the fresh Jathas from offering themselves for arrest but the Akalis, who knew about the sufferings they were to undergo and had come prepared for them, continued pouring in an ever-increasing numbers. On 19 October 1922, the number of those arrested in connection with Guru-ka-Bagh had gone up to 2,457.[80]

On 25 October 1922, the situation at Guru-ka-Bagh took a new turn when an exclusive Akali Jatha of 101 military pensioners under the leadership of Subedar-Major Amar Singh was arrested and 'its members were stripped so completely naked that nothing but *Kachhairias* were left on their persons'.[81] Another pensioners' Jatha of 103 persons marched from Amritsar on 12 November under the leadership of Risaldar Ranjodh Singh. The pensioners' open conflict with the authorities could have dangerous implications. The Sikh soldiers in the Indian Army were bound to be affected. Photographs of the beatings of the Akalis, including the military pensioners, and other Akali propaganda material had reached some of the Sikh units in spite of the tight measures of the Army authorities to prevent the leakage of such information.

The very real danger that the Sikh soldiers would be affected and the rumours that the Sikh graduates of Khalsa College, Amritsar, were being asked to join the Jathas to Guru-ka-Bagh brought home to the authorities the imperative need for an immediate solution. Moreover, contrary to the Government's expectation that its repressive action at a remote village (Guru-ka-Bagh) would not attract sympathisers, spectators, press reporters and photographers, a large

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

number of them continued to visit the place. They played a major role in exposing the brutality of the police by publishing accounts of such actions in the newspapers. Later, the press representatives of some leading newspapers in the country issued a Joint Statement[82] on 4 August 1922. This contained a report of police excesses at Guru-ka-Bagh and of the denial of access to visitors and newspapermen to the place. Also listed in the statement were accounts by eyewitnesses of the indecent treatment meted out to them and to certain prominent public men.

The Indian National Congress not only continued its support by sending its observers but took even greater interest in the Akali affairs. At a special meeting of its Working Committee, held on 17 September 1922, two resolutions were adopted—one strongly condemning the police brutalities and the other appointing a Sub-Committee to conduct an enquiry into the Guru-ka-Bagh affair and the high-handedness of the police officials.[83] Other national leaders, among them Madan Mohan Malaviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan and many members of the Legislative Assembly and the Panjab Legislative Council, continued to visit Guru-ka-Bagh and issued statements contradicting the official reports that 'minimum force was being used in dealing with the Akalis'.[84] The Congress Sub-Committee published a report highly critical of official policy after examining more than 110 eyewitnesses to the police brutalities and who formed a cross-section of social and political strata—Congressmen, Khilafatis, moderates, extremists, press reporters, Members of the Panjab Legislative Council, doctors, etc.[85]

Propaganda in the press and on the platform, reports of Congress and other national leaders, statements of the press representatives, exposure of the police high-handedness by the Publicity Committee of the S.G.P.C., reports by C.I.D. officials about rumours of the adverse effect on the Sikh soldiers in the Indian Army, on the moderates and the loyalists and the peasantry, criticism in England and the United States,[86] all these factors seem to have unnerved the authorities in the Panjab as well as at Delhi and London. They wanted an immediate escape from this situation, but at the same time did not wish to suffer further loss of prestige which they felt had already been lowered by the unconditional release of the Akali prisoners in connection with the 'Keys Affair'.

A retired Government Engineer, Rai Bahadur Sir Ganga Ram, found a way out of the tangle by leasing the land of the Guru-

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

ka-Bagh from the Mahant and then allowing the Akalis to cut wood.[87] As soon as Sir Ganga Ram informed the Deputy Commissioner of his action, the police were withdrawn from the Guru-ka-Bagh. The barbed wire around its enclosures was removed and the Akalis took possession of the land attached to the Guru-ka-Bagh.

Thus, suddenly and most undramatically, ended the long-drawn struggle in which more than 1,500 Akalis were injured and over 5,000 suffered imprisonment.[88]

Officials in the Panjab were happy that his solution had saved their respect and at the same time left the Akali leadership with no field for manoeuvre. In a letter dated 17 November 1922, addressed to S.P.O' Donnell, H.D. Craik, while conveying the 'good news' that the arrest of daily Jathas had ended, wrote: 'The S.G.P.C. will probably be taken aback but they will be confronted by a *fait accompli* which they will find difficult to present as a defeat of the Government, the agreement between the Mahant and his tenant being a contract between two private persons.'[89] But contrary to such wishful thinking, the S.G.P.C., which had known about the mischief of the bureaucracy, was neither taken aback by the news nor disposed to accept it as a defeat of its programme. In a communique issued much earlier than the official announcement, it warned the Akali volunteers that 'the Government is going to take a step which will stop people from being arrested. It is alleged that the Government is just going to persuade the Mahant to lease his land to a public-spirited man who will not object to the trees being cut and thus arrests will cease.' Further, the communique warned the Sikhs that 'they should not be trapped in this way but should go on offering themselves for arrest'.[90] In fact, this early exposure of the plan forced the Governor of the Panjab to contradict the S.G.P.C.'s version in the Legislative Council: 'There is no truth', he said, 'in the allegation that the Mahant is being persuaded to lease his land to some public-spirited man'.[91]

But the secret correspondence between the Panjab Government and the higher officials of the Government of India informing the latter of the latest developments about the Akali Movement, and the public announcement a few days later of the lease of land reveal the degree of inadequacy of the official machinery in its efforts to conceal its weakness. The very fact that Sir Ganga Ram was encouraged in his efforts by the Government (and this is admitted

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

by two high officials of the Panjab Government, H.D. Craik and Sir John Maynard)[92] shows that it was the Government that wanted an escape-route and not the 'public-spirited man' or the S.G.P.C. A loyal friend was thus used as a cat's paw to pull the Government's chestnuts out of a fire of its own making through its miscalculation of Akali strength and determination.

From the S.G.P.C. communiques and the statement of S.B. Mehtab Singh, we learn that the local Government initially tried to persuade the Akali leaders through Nawab Aslam Hiyyat to meet Sir Ganga Ram and work out some sort of compromise by fixing a certain maintenance allowance for the Mahant.[93] When the Akali leaders refused to accept any compromise till the unconditional release of all the prisoners, Sir Ganga Ram is said to have told them that 'the Governor of the Panjab is making efforts to get the Government out of this difficulty somehow or the other',[94] and that 'the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Dunnett, is eager for a compromise with the Akali leaders'.[95] The only difference was that while the Akalis wanted the release of the prisoners before the passage of the Bill, Mr. Dunnett agreed to their release only after the Bill was passed and accepted by the Sikhs.[96]

Meditation efforts by Sir Ganga Ram solved only one of the many problems of the Government by terminating the daily arrests of the Jathas. The bigger problem of over 5,600 of Akalis lodged in the jails still worried the authorities. Here also an opportunity offered itself soon in the form of Hindu-Muslim riots in Amritsar[97] which broke out on 11 March 1923. The Akali leaders believed that such Hindu-Muslims disunity had no place in the 'city of communal harmony' (the name which Amritsar had come to acquire as a result of the heightened sense of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity displayed during the Akali Movement).[98] After all, it was with the goodwill and support of the Hindus and the Muslims that the Akalis had successfully launched and won their struggle against the Government at Guru-ka-Bagh. But as the struggle was not yet over, the main goal of the movement would not be achievable without continued communal harmony and the active moral support of the Hindus and Muslims. Consequently, the S.G.P.C. sent some Akali volunteers to patrol the city with a view to maintaining peace, order and harmony. It is clear that the Akalis did not take this step with a view to pleasing the authorities. But the Government

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

took advantage of this incident. In the Akali assistance in maintaining law and order, the authorities found a gesture of goodwill worth reciprocating and decided to unconditionally release all the Akali volunteers arrested in connection with the Guru-ka-Bagh morcha.[99]

In ordering the unconditional release of the Akalis this time, the officials were not so much hoping to restore the friendly relations with the Akali leadership (such as existed when the prisoners in the 'Keys Affair' were released) as they were anxious to get rid of the large number of Akali prisoners. The last lines of Craik's letter to J. Crerar illustrate this point:

> Whether this hope (of release having ameliorating effect on the relations between the Government and the Sikhs) is realised or not, the recent incident at Amritsar *provides the Government* with *a good opportunity of getting rid of these prisoners....*[100]

To summarise, in its anxiety to regain the loss of prestige suffered during the 'Keys Affair', the Government had opened a fresh front at Guru-ka-Bagh in the hope of delivering a severe blow to the Akali organisations, only to receive another worse set-back when it had to release the Akali prisoners unconditionally and accept their right to cut wood from the garden attached to the Gurdwara at Guru-ka-Bagh.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

4

The Akali Struggle in the Sikh States

The Akali Movement in the Sikh States—an outcome of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh's anxiety to win over the support of the radical section of the Sikh community, and the S.G.P.C.'s response in taking up the question of his restoration—is an important phase in the Akali struggle against British imperialism. Apart from the fact that the rulers of two important Sikh States—Bhupinder Singh of Patiala and Ripudaman Singh of Nabha—were closely involved, one way or the other, with the movement right from its inception till the finale, it was in the Sikh States that the Akali leadership, after its initial successes in the 'Keys Affair' and at Guru-ka-Bagh, offered a fresh challenge to the authorities on an issue of dubious relevance. It was during their agitation in the Sikh States that the Akalis met with the strongest opposition from the British officials who decided to put an effective stop to their activities by declaring Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Shromani Akali Dal and the various Jathas affiliated to them as 'unlawful associations'[1]. It was here again that the Sikh princes, Sikh troops, Sikh Sudhar and Zail Committees and other vested interests in the community rallied around the Government in weakening a popular democratic movement.

As a detailed history of the Akali Movement in the Sikh States (which in fact became a synonym for the State subjects' struggle

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

against the tyranny of their rulers and may, therefore, form the subject of an independent study)[2] is not within the scope of the present work, this chapter has been limited mainly to the Akali activities in the two important Sikh States, Nabha and Patiala—[3] that too, only up to 1925. To begin with some important issues arising out of the Akali leadership's decision to take up the question of the restoration of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, are discussed. This is followed by a presentation of a brief account of the measures adopted by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala to check the Akali activities in his own State and to help the British officials to meet the Akali challenge.

Akali Involvement in the Nabha Affair

The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha[4] and the Akali involvement in the affair is one of the most controversial issues of the Akali Movement. The Maharaja, who ascended the throne on 20 December 1911,[5] was made to abdicate in favour of his minor son, Partap Singh, on 9 July 1923.[6]

According to the official version of the circumstances leading to his abdication, when Justice Stuart was enquiring into the Patiala-Nabha dispute,[7] Narsingha Rao, the Chief Minister of Nabha, on 21 April 1923, submitted proposals to the Government of India to permit the Maharaja temporarily to suspend his control over the administration of the state. This was in order to allow him some rest to recover his health which had been undermined by the tension arising from the Patiala-Nabha dispute and the Government enquiry which was in progress.[8] From a letter which Col. Minchin wrote to J.P. Thompson, Political Secretary to Government of India, we learn that Ripudaman Singh went to Kasauli on 5 June 1923 to discuss his difficulties with the Political Agent and to seek his advice in settling his disputes with Patiala. Col. Minchin urged the Maharaja to 'voluntarily sever all his connections with the administration of his state'. He argued that such an action 'would avoid harsher treatment which would result if there were a formal enquiry into the administration of the State'. A few days later, the Maharaja is said to have tentatively agreed to this step, but on certain conditions.[9]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

However, the Maharaja contradicted the above mentioned version. In his letter to Lord Reading, the Viceroy, the Maharaja emphasised that he was intimidated into voluntary retirement by his 'self-seeking officials' and the Political Agent to the Governor-General.[10] Describing the circumstances leading to his decision to retire temporarily from the administration of his State, the Maharaja wrote:

> Taking advantage of my exhausted health my self-seeking officials, who, I have come to know, were under the influence of my rivals and officials of the Political Department, overwhelmed me with repeated suggestions to leave my state in their hands and placate the Government by allowing it greater powers of intervention in the affairs of my State.[11]

During the interval between the Maharaja's meeting with Col. Minchin on 5 June 1923 and his abdication on 9 July 1923, certain new developments brought about a material change in the situation. While the Government of India was busy settling the details of the terms on which the Maharaja was to be allowed to sever his connections with the administration of his State and was corresponding with Lord Peel, the Secretary of State for India,[12] for his approval of the terms, the Maharaja had been approached by some extremist Akali leaders like Master Tara Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh and Teja Singh Samundri.[13] These leaders are said to have advised the Maharaja against severing his connections with his State's administration. According to the Maharaja, they are said to have further assured him vociferously: 'Either you will be restored to the throne or the whole community will die fighting for your cause.'[14]

Assurance of help by the Akali leaders seems to have led the Maharaja to revise his stand. Instead of humbly submitting to the wishes of the British or his own officials, the Maharaja started cultivating the radical Sikh leadership. With the help of Akali leaders and his own liberal allowances,[15] the Maharaja also won over the editors of some of the pro-Akali papers, among them *Sachha Dhandora*, *Daler-i-Hind*, *Bir Akali* and *Kirpan Bahadur*.[16] It was mainly due to the propaganda of these papers—which depicted the Maharaja as a 'Nationalist Prince', 'an orthodox self-respecting Sikh ruler' and a 'religious leader of the Sikh community'[17] and made him the 'Simon de

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Montfort'[18] of the Indian princes'—that the Maharaja was able to win the goodwill and support of the majority of the Sikh community. Another effect of the propaganda of the pro-Akali papers was that the official interference in the Sikh religion', as these papers described Nabha State as 'the Guru's own House' (*Tera ghar mera ase*) on the basis of an old *Hukamnamah*[19] issued by Guru Gobind Singh to the ancestors of the Maharaja.

The Maharaja's association with the radical Akali leadership and his growing popularity with the Sikh masses as a result of the propaganda in the native press was seen as a potential political danger by the officials who were already watching with concern the growing popularity of the Akali Movement in the Panjab. In a telegram to Lord Peel, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Reading wrote: '....in the small but turbulent community of the Sikhs he (Maharaja) is a big enough man to cause us a good deal of trouble' and added that 'this risk will be averted to a great extent....if we can get him removed from the sphere of Sikh politics suddenly, by his own act.'[20]

It was with a view to averting the above-mentioned danger that the Viceroy sent Mr. O'Grady, a retired British official, to obtain a letter from the Maharaja severing his connections with the Nabha administration. A combination of tact and threats led the Maharaja to sign the letter of abdication on 7 July 1923.[21] That the Maharaja was an unwilling party to the arrangement is indicated by the report that Col. Minchin sent to the Government of India: 'Mr. O'Grady tells me that he had great difficulty in inducing His Highness to sign this letter.'[22] Col. Minchin then took the Maharaja by surprise: on the morning of 8 July, accompanied by troops and armoured cars, he took control of the Nabha administration and sent the Maharaja to Dehra Dun under military escort.[23]

As the news of the abdication of the Maharaja and his removal to Dehra Dun was made public, the native press, the S.G.P.C., the Akali and the nationalist leadership reacted sharply. Pro-Akali newspapers, which had already been carrying on propaganda in favour of Ripudaman Singh, exhibited a two-fold reaction: (i) stormy protest against the Government's interference in Nabha and (ii) further glorification of the Maharaja. These papers challenged the official version that the Maharaja had abdicated on his own and declared that the statements issued by the Government were false

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

and deceptive.[24] The *Akali* dated 13 August 1923 wrote: 'The charges levelled against him are serious and it is necessary to rebut them, for silence will be taken to mean that they are well-founded.'[25] *The Nation* wrote that 'it possessed certain information of a most serious nature and the facts before it revealed that the statements made by the responsible authorities themselves that the abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha was obtained as a result of a farcical display of charge-sheets which were meant to hoodwink the credulous'.[26] British officials were charged with having insulted the Maharaja, the Senior Maharani Sahiba and her daughter, and having forcibly taken possession of the valuables in the palace.[27] The feelings of the Sikhs were stirred by quoting Minchin as having taunted the Maharaja with the query: 'Where is that Akali?' The official action in Nabha was described as a challenge to the Akali Movement.[28]

Leaders of the Indian National Congress, who otherwise held 'no briefs for the Maharaja', also eulogized him with the epithet of a 'nationalist prince' and argued that 'he was deposed not for his short-comings but for his virtues'.[29]

With the Akali leadership's decision to take up the question of Ripudaman Singh's restoration to the throne of Nabha, the issue of his abdication assumed wider ramifications and the area of controversy expanded. In the beginning, opinions differed among the members of the S.G.P.C. with regard to their stand on the issue. The moderate members felt that the abdication was a 'political issue' and, as such, the S.G.P.C., which was a religious body, was not competent to take up the question of the Maharaja's restoration.[30] These members argued that if the Akali leadership felt that in deposing the Maharaja the Government had injured the feelings of the Sikh community, the question should then be taken up by the Sikh League, the political organisation of the Sikhs.[31] Most of the members of the S.G.P.C. were in favour of 'watching the developments and taking a moderate line of action'.[32]

Eventually, the propaganda of the native press, particularly through such pro-Nabha papers as *Akali*, *Akali-te-Pardesi* and some newspapers started or financed by Maharaja Ripudaman Singh such as *Sachha Dhandora*, *Daler-i-Hind*, *Bir Akali* and *Kirpan Bahadur*,[33] made a strong impact on the Sikhs. These

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

papers argued that the Maharaja was deposed not because of the mal-administration in his State or his dispute with the Maharaja of Patiala, but because of his sympathy for and support to the Akali Movement.[34] 'The official action' these papers stated, 'was a side-attack on the Akali Movement'.[35] In the meantime, a militant group of the Akalis in the Shromani Akali Dal and the Sikh League joined hands in exerting pressure on the S.G.P.C. to take speedy pro-Maharaja action. The Shromani Akali Dal passed formal resolutions urging the S.G.P.C. 'to raise a typhoon of agitation till the Maharaja was restored' and assured the leadership of the S.G.P.C. of its whole-hearted support in the struggle.[36]

A strong public opinion having been thus created, Master Tara Singh, an extremist Akali leader, did the spade-work for the Akali struggle for the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha. Through a series of forceful articles in the two Akali dailies, *Akali* and the *Akali-te-Pardesi*, he made an effort to arouse Sikh sentiments by reviving the memory of the removal of Maharaja Duleep Singh from the Panjab thus drawing a parallel between the two events.[37] For example, in one of the issues of *Akali-te-Pardesi* he wrote:

> Lovers of the Panth, will you allow the guardians of Maharaja Duleep Singh to take charge of the Tikka Sahib of Nabha? Rise, hold Diwans and deliver lectures. Every Sikh society should raise a storm of agitation against this treachery and deceit.... Do not stop, be fearless and come forward...[38]

The Akali leadership formally took up the question of the restoration of the Maharaja by issuing a communique on 9 July 1923 stating: 'The hereditary ruler of Nabha was unjustly and forcibly detached from the administration of his state by the Government of India.'[39] The communique further charged the Government with 'arbitrary conduct and high-handedness towards the Maharaja'.[40] 29 July was fixed as a 'day of prayer' for the restoration of the Maharaja and 9 September 'the day for barefooted protest-march' in the principal streets of Delhi and important towns of the Panjab.[41] The sangat on such occasions was urged 'to pass resolutions condemning the action of the Government and the political agent and send messages of sympathy telegraphically to whatever place the Maharaja might have been removed'.[42] In another communique issued on 10 July 1923, it was stated that the S.G.P.C. had 'very good reasons to

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

believe that the abdication of the Maharaja was not voluntary but had been exhorted by official pressure; that the weakening of the Nabha was the thin end of the wedge against an important section of the Sikh Community....'[43] On 2 August 1923, the S.G.P.C. sent the following telegram to the Viceroy:

> Shromani Committee is in possession of unimpeachable documentary evidence to prove that intimidation and threats were used by Government officials to compel him to sign a pronouncement that his relinquishment was voluntary. Shromani Committee on behalf of Sikh community asks Indian Government to submit to independent enquiry to satisfy Sikhs, failing that Sikh community will have right to believe that Indian Government admits above contention.[44]

The telegram was followed by a reminder, but evidently the Government thought that if it were to acknowledge the S.G.P.C.'s telegram, it would be admitting the Akali leadership's right to take up the question of the Maharaja's restoration; it neither acknowledged this telegram nor refuted the Akali charge.[45]

Failing to get any assurance from the Government either of the restoration of the Maharaja in the near future or of the appointment of an independent enquiry Committee, the Akali leadership thought of getting the grievance redressed through non-violent agitation. At a meeting of the general body of the S.G.P.C., held on 4 August 1923, the Committee decided with a majority vote[46] that 'the Nabha question was one with which it is entitled to deal'.[47] On the following day, i.e., 5 August, the Committee unanimously passed resolutions criticising the action of the Government and describing it as 'a side attack' on the Akali Movement, condemning treacherous officials of the Maharaja, and authorising its Executive Committee to get the wrong done to Nabha and the Panth righted by all peaceful and legitimate means.[48]

The officials in the province and the higher authorities at Delhi, who were watching the development with great concern, prepared themselves to meet the impending challenge from the Akalis. Even before the S.G.P.C. could formally pass the above resolution, the Viceroy of India had called a meeting of the rulers of the Sikh States, the Political Agent for the Phoolkian States, the British

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Administrator of Nabha and other important officials of the Government of India and of the Panjab to discuss joint measures and to co-ordinate the efforts of the Government of the Panjab and the rulers of the Sikh States to deal with the Akali agitation on the Nabha question. It was decided that 'the Akali Jathas should not be checked from leaving the British territories',[49] as it was thought that handling the Akali Jathas in the Sikh States would be easier. Apart from the use of Sikh troops to be supplied by the Sikh rulers, there was another advantage. Official action against the Jathas in the native States could also escape the attention of a large number of press reporters and other observers. The Conference assured the Administrator of Nabha that 'the Government would support him fully and sympathetically in any reasonable action he would pursue'.[50] It was also decided that 'firing would be considered legitimate in case of active resistance.'[51]

On his return to Nabha, the administration[52] started making preparations to meet the impending challenge. The administration of Nabha armed itself by issuing certain ordinances prohibiting meetings within the State territory to discuss the Nabha issue.[53] It seems that the ordinances failed to discourage the Akalis in Nabha State who had described official action against the Maharaja as 'a blow to the Panthic orthodoxy, organisation and well-being'. In defiance of these orders, the Akalis continued to hold Diwans in different parts of Nabha State to discuss and condemn the official action.[54] One such Diwan was organised at Jaito on 25 August 1923. A huge procession was taken out on the first day of the Diwan. On the third day, 27 August, certain resolutions were passed which, apart from expressing sympathy with the Maharaja, condemned the action of the State police, the treacherous State officials and the arrest of the Akalis in the neighbouring state of Patiala.[55] Under the orders of Gurdial Singh, the Assistant Administrator, the State police arrested the organisers, Inder Singh and other Akalis on charges of delivering 'political speeches'.[56] The incident offered the Akalis a challenge and the Diwan, which was originally fixed for three days and was to disperse on 27 August, was extended indefinitely.[57]

So far the Akali Diwan at Jaito had been a local affair as no Akali had yet come from outside,[58] but the action of the Nabha administration drew the attention of the Akali leaders from outside the State. To continue the Diwan and perhaps to attract visitors from outside, the organisers started an *Akhand Path* at Jaito. The

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Nabha police, in their bid to arrest the Akalis, including the one reading the holy Granth, is alleged to have disrupted the Akhand Path. The incident caused a great commotion among the Akalis who were already disturbed by the forced abdication of the Maharaja and the arrest of the organisers of the Diwan.[59]

On 29 September 1923, the S.G.P.C. passed a comprehensive resolution in five parts, condemning the official action in disrupting the Akhand Path and declaring its intention of restoring the Sikh right to free worship at all costs.

Akali Struggle at Jaito

Jaito, a small town in Nabha State, thus became the scene of a virulent Akali morcha. The S.G.P.C. with a view to vindicating its right to free-worship and to getting the Maharaja restored, decided to send daily Jathas to Jaito from the Akal Takhat at Amritsar. To begin with, Jathas of 25 members each daily walked to Jaito after taking a pledge of non-violence in thought, word and deed before the Akal Takhat, with the following aims:

(a) to resume the interrupted Akhand Path at Gangsar, Jaito and

(b) to suffer in meek and humble spirit all hardships and tortures inflicted by the proud officials for the sake of establishing the Sikh birth-right for free congregation and worship in all Sikh Gurdwaras.[60]

The British officials in the province who were watching with great concern the growing power and prestige of the Akali leadership noticed that this was adding to the success of the S.G.P.C.'s appeal in impressing upon the non-Akali Sikhs that this was a purely religious programme.[61] The officials were particularly worried that the journey of the Akali Jathas to Jaito would be 'of the nature of a triumphal procession',[62] which would add further to the Akali prestige. Higher officials suggested that timely action would not only check the Akali activities but would also restore the prestige of the bureaucracy.[63] To those British officials in the province who were waiting for 'sufficient evidence' to implement the Secretary of State's advice 'to put an effective stop to the Akali operations by the arrest and prosecution of all the organisers (of the Akali Movement) as abettors',[64] the Akali Jathas' march to Nabha provided

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

a good opportunity to declare the Shromani Akali Dal, the S.G.P.C. and other allied organisations as 'unlawful associations'.[65]

The decision to send Jathas to Jaito was described as 'openly encouraging bodies of Akalis to invade the Nabha State with the object of intimidating the Government and to interfere with the maintenance of law and order'.[66] By an order dated 12 October 1923, the Government of Panjab declared the S.G.P.C., and all Jathas organised by or affiliated to it, as 'unlawful associations' since they constituted 'a danger to the public peace'.[67] Consequently, all the 60 members of the Interim Committee of the S.G.P.C. were arrested and charged with 'treason against the King-Emperor'.[68] The order and the subsequent official action failed to achieve the desired results. They could not 'put an effective stop to the Akali activity'. Jathas continued to pour into Jaito from all parts of the Panjab. As planned earlier at the official meeting held in Delhi on 25 July, these Jathas were not checked in the British territories. However, as soon as they reached the boundaries of the Nabha State, they were arrested and beaten mercilessly. But the members of the Jathas, as Jawaharlal Nehru testified, gave an 'amazing exhibition of courage and endurance...and never retreated a step, nor did they raise their hands against the police....'[69] After being kept in custody for a few days, they were sent to the neighbouring areas of Babalkanti in Rajasthan or to Rewari, some 500 kilometers away from Nabha. Here they were left 'in penniless condition to shift for themselves as best as they could'.[70] According to a contemporary, 'within a period of seven months this happened with no less than 5,000 Akali pilgrims'.[71]

However, the march of the smaller Jathas of 25 members to Jaito and their arrest by the Nabha State authorities did not yield any tangible results. In order to intensify the agitation, the S.G.P.C. decided that a bigger *Shahidi Jatha* of 500 Akalis should reach Jaito on 21 February 1924 to coincide with the third anniversary of the Nankana tragedy.[72] After making preliminary arrangements, the S.G.P.C. decided to despatch the Jatha on 9 February 1924. Before its departure, the Jatha, which comprised men from different professions and classes from various parts of the Panjab, was exhorted by the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat 'to remain perfectly non-violent in thought, word and deed'.[73] According to the report of the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, 'the members of the Jatha were not regular hangers-on of the Durbar Sahib but included genuine

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

fanatics'.[74] Later, Dr. Saifud-Din Kitchlew, Pandit Dina Nath and some other members of the Congress Party also joined the Jatha. According to official reports, about 30,000 people witnessed the Jatha set out from the Clock Tower at Amritsar.[75]

On its march, the members of the Jatha were welcomed by the villages they passed through. When the Jatha entered the Malwa territory, in the Sikh State of Patiala, the local Sikhs undaunted by the *Shahi Farmans* of their ruler, Bhupinder Singh, welcomed it. In an address presented to the Jatha the Malwa Sikhs assured the Akali leadership that 'if this place (Jaito) is made the second Nankana Sahib we take the vow that, in obedience to the orders of the Guru Panth and subject to non-violence, each and every one of us will shed his blood at the place where your sweat falls, we are at all times ready to serve you....'[76]

After marching through different villages and evoking spirited response from the Sikh peasantry of Malwa on 20 February, the Jatha enthusiastically reached Bargari, a village on the border of Nabha and Faridkot about 15 kilometers from Jaito. The Jatha left for its destination, the Gurdwara of Gangsar at Jaito, on 21 February about mid-day. Here Mr. Zimand, *The New York Times* correspondent, also joined them. According to many independent observers including Mr. Zimand: 'the Jatha was moving in perfect order and non-violence with large crowds of public on its right and left, five *Nishan Sahibs* in the front and Guru Granth in the middle'.[77]

When the Jatha reached a distance of about 150 meters from the Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib, Mr. Wilson-Johnston, the Administrator of Nabha, arrived and ordered it to stop.[78] But the Jatha which had taken a vow before the Akal Takhat to resume the interrupted Akhand Path, come what may, and was determined not to return without achieving their goal, continued to march in the direction of Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib. Mr. Wilson Johnston, gave the signal to open fire.[79]

According to Mr. Zimand :

It was at 2.25 p.m. that the firing started. The firing was in regular volleys and there were no desultory shots. The first round of firing lasted for full two minutes, i.e., from 2.45 to 2.47 p.m. The second round of firing started at 2.55 and it lasted for full three minutes.[80]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The members of Jatha, who from the very beginning knew the risk involved in their march to Jaito and were prepared to attain martyrdom, were not deterred by the volleys of bullets and continued their onward march.[81] Many of them fell dead or wounded; but carrying them the rest of the Jatha moved directly to Tibbi Sahib.

According to Mr. Zimand, the dead and the wounded were not attended to by the State authorities.[82] This is confirmed by Dr. Kitchlew and Principal Gidwani who visited the place to take care of the dead and the wounded.[83] According to the S.G.P.C. communiques, and the reports in the native press, 'the Akalis were prevented by the army men from removing the dead and the wounded and thus many of the wounded died for lack of attendance and water'.[84] According to some eyewitnesses, 'the dead and wounded amongst the sangat were seen scattered in the corn-fields. Medical staff travelling with the Jatha and the store of medicine, etc., were seized by the Nabha Administration.....'[85] Moreover, Dr. Kehar Singh, in charge of the Medical arrangement of the Jathas, was also arrested.[86]

Opinions differ regarding the number of casualties. According to the S.G.P.C., 'the exact number of the dead and the wounded could not be ascertained as the scene of the tragedy was made inaccessible to independent observers and press reporters....'[87] Pro-Akali newspapers put the number of the dead and wounded at over 500, while the S.G.P.C. communique reported that there were over 300 casualties, including 70 to 150 dead.[88] Official reports and the report of the Judicial Magistrate who conducted an enquiry into the incident put the number at 19 dead and 28 wounded.[89]

The native press reacted by applauding the Jatha for their sacrifices and by severely condemning the Administrator of Nabha and the Government of India for their barbarity and for enacting another Jallianwala spectacle. *The Onward* wrote: 'General Dyer is reborn and re-incarnated in the person of the Administrator of Nabha'.[90] *The Loyal Gazette* drew a comparison between the incident at Jaito and the earlier tragedy at Nankana and wrote that while the latter was the work of a 'selfish and tyrannical Mahant', the former was that of a 'civilized Government headed by a European officer, with high professions about justice and law and order'.[91] *Akali-te-Pardesi* and other pro-Akali papers held the Government of India responsible for the incident and demanded the appointment of a committee to enquire into the facts.[92] *Kesri* held the view: 'Nabha officials had

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

pre-arranged a sinister and terrible plan and wanted to conceal their criminal and murderous designs from eyewitnesses.'[93] Scathing in its denunciation, the editor of *Bharat* declared: 'It appears that owing to successive defeats in the Legislative Assembly, the Government of India have become mentally deranged, otherwise they would not have given such a foolish advice to Nabha authorities'.[94] The press refuted and ridiculed the Government of India's plea that it had no hand in the firing at Jaito and that since Nabha was outside the jurisdiction of the British, they could not interfere in its internal affairs. For example, *Bande Matram* asked 'whether those killed at Jaito were not subjects of British India and whether or not the Indian States are under the Government of India and whether or not the latter will interfere if the Indian States are invaded'. The paper further stated: '...if the Administrator can go to Delhi to confer with the Government of India, how is one to believe that the Nabha Durbar is doing everything on its own, without the Government of India having a hand in the affair'.[95]

Important leaders of the Indian National Congress who were watching with keen interest the Akali involvement in the Nabha affair and had, in fact, formally expressed sympathy with the Maharaja and the Akalis, condemned the official action. Public meetings were held at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Karachi which were addressed by such popular national leaders as Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, C.R. Dass, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Malaviya and others.[96] Mahatma Gandhi and Lala Lajpat Rai also expressed their sympathy with the Akali cause.[97]

In a resolution passed on 31 December 1923, the Congress described the official action against the Akali leadership as 'a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians' and appealed to the nation to stand by the Sikhs.[98] The Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League also expressed their sympathies with the Akalis. Nationalist Members in the Central Assembly and the Panjab Legislative Council also condemned the Jaito firing.

In order partially to appease public opinion, the Government of India advised the Nabha authorities to conduct an enquiry into the Jaito firing which a subordinate Magistrate of Nabha was ordered to conduct.[99] In his lengthy report, the Magistrate exonerated the State officials and held the members of the Jatha and the crowd following it, guilty of 'using fire-arms'. Justifying the firing at the Jatha, he wrote that 'the firing was first started by an unknown

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Akali' and that the Nabha authorities had, under the circumstances, 'no option but to open fire....'[100]

This charge, however, seems to be an invention of the executive machinery in connivance with the Judicial Magistrate. It is contradicted by the evidence of such eyewitnesses and observers as S. Zimand, Dr. Kitchlew and Principal Gidwani. Writing to Mahatma Gandhi about the official charge that 'the Jatha was armed with *lathis, chhavis,* spears and fire-arms', S. Zimand wrote:

> I want, therefore, to repeat again that *I observed carefully* the *Jatha and the crowds* following the Jatha from February 20th, 7 p.m. till February 21st, 2 p.m. when they entered Nabha territory and that to the best of my knowledge the Jatha and the crowd following the Jatha *were not armed; and behaved in a peaceful and orderly manner.*[101]

In the statement given to the Congress, Akali Sahayak Bureau, which prepared its own report about the Jaito firing, Dr. Kitchlew said, 'we have absolutely satisfied ourselves that the Jatha and the sangat had no fire-arms or chhavis (except Kirpan) or any other instruments other than ordinary lathis'.[102]

While the demand for an independent enquiry into the Jaito firing was going on, the Akali leadership continued sending more Jathas to Jaito even though some national leaders advised them to suspend their movement in order to take fresh stock of the situation and also to give time to the Government to think over the problem. It is interesting here to note that Mahatma Gandhi, who was mainly responsible for the Akalis shifting from purely religious agitation to passive resistance against the Government and was a source of inspiration to the Akalis, also advised them to suspend their movement and to stop sending more Jathas to Jaito. In his letter dated 4 March 1924 to the Secretary of the S.G.P.C., the Mahatma advised the Akalis to think over the whole question afresh. Further he informed them that he would be able to help them only if the Akalis could separate their agitation in Nabha, which in his opinion was a purely political question, from their movement of religious reform. Here the Mahatma seems to have neglected the fact that it was he and his lieutenants in the Sikh League who brought the Akalis from religion to politics and persuaded them to formally join the movement of non-cooperation by launching

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

a frontal attack against the bureaucracy which was backing the vested interests in the Sikh shrines. During his visit to Nankana soon after the tragedy he not only expressed sympathy with the Akalis but also advised them to offer non-cooperation to the Government in the matter of the official enquiry into the tragedy and agreed to serve as the President of the non-official enquiry committee in case the Akalis agreed to adopt a formal resolution of non-cooperation. In a long speech (in Hindustani) he called upon the Akalis to broaden the scope of their movement for the liberation of the Sikh shrines by joining the larger movement for the liberation of the country. Later, when the Akalis delivered moral defeat to the powerful bureaucracy in the Panjab over the 'Keys Affair', the Mahatma sent a congratulatory telegram to Baba Kharak Singh, President of the S.G.P.C., and hailed the Akali victory as 'the first victory of the forces of nationalism in the country'. At that stage, when the Akalis were engaged in a life and death struggle at Jaito, the Mahatma's advice to immediately suspend the movement and to drop the Nabha issue altogether was bound to further weaken the Akali Movement. When the Akali leaders expressed their inability to accept his advice and continued sending more Jathas to Jaito, the Mahatma started issuing open letters expressing his doubts about the Akalis' adherence to the principle of non-violence. The Mahatma's reference to the alleged demolition of the Hindu temples by the Sikh reformers and to the past incidents of the removal of Hindu idols from the precincts of the Golden Temple were bound to weaken the communal harmony brought about by the Akali Movement by enlisting the sympathy and support of the Hindu and Sikh masses to the Akali cause. In his letters to the Akalis the Mahatma wanted them to give him an assurance that their movement was 'neither anti-Hindu nor anti-any other race or creed'. The Mahatma seems to have also been influenced by the official propaganda that the Akalis were working for the 'restoration of the Sikh Raj under the cloak of religious reform' when he asked them to declare that 'the S.G.P.C. has no desire for the establishment of the Sikh Raj'. In spite of the Akalis giving a clear demonstration of their strict adherence to the principle of passive sufferings at Nankana, Guru-ka-Bagh, Jaito and other places, and a number of independent observers including the Congress leaders testifying to this, and of the S.G.P.C. formally condemning violent activities, confirming their belief in nonviolence and categorically stating that 'their movement was neither anti-Hindu

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

nor anti-any other creed' with no desire of establishing Sikh Raj, the Mahatma showed himself unable to form a correct assessment of the Akalis and their movement and suddenly withdrew his support to their cause at a very critical juncture. Whether this shift in the Mahatma's stand was due to his fears about the Akalis becoming violent and Jaito repeating the history of Chauri Chaura or in keeping with his policy of suspending the movements when they grew too strong and went beyond the control of his trusted lieutenants is a question which needs further investigation.[103]

After the sudden withdrawal of moral support by Mahatma Gandhi, a number of other factors added to the difficulties of the Akali leadership. Opening of fresh front at Bhai Pheru, in Lahore District, while the Jaito morcha was still on, put additional strain on the Akali resources. Malcolm Hailey, the new Governor of Panjab, tried to weaken the movement by his new policy of isolating the Akalis from the nationalist leadership and by creating divisions in their ranks. In order to divert the energies and resources of the Akalis and thereby weaken their movement, he urged the judicial machinery in the State to appoint a Receiver for Nankana Sahib and to terminate the lease of land at Guru-ka-Bagh given to Sir Ganga Ram. At the same time, he encouraged the officially sponsored anti-Akali associations to produce drafts of the Gurdwara Bill and to take the initiative in the matter of the Akhand Path at Jaito and to thus take wind out of the Akali sails.[104]

The Government of the Panjab was also growing tired of the increasing number of Akali prisoners resulting from the Akali leadership's decision not to suspend Jathas marching to Jaito. Apart from the practical difficulties of accommodating the increasing number of Akali prisoners, there were equally important political considerations which compelled the Panjab Government to find a solution to the Jaito problem. Official action at Jaito and the arrest and detention of a large number of British subjects in the Nabha State without proper trials provided the nationalist Members of the Indian Legislative Assembly and other critics of the Government with a chance to lambaste the official policy.[105] The Panjab Government's failure to find a solution to the Akali problem and to get an agreed Bill passed for the purpose strengthened the efforts of M.A. Jinnah and Madan Mohan Malaviya to introduce a Gurdwara Bill in the Central Legislative Assembly.[106]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

It was under these circumstances that the Akali leadership and the British officials renewed their efforts for a solution to the Jaito problem. While the Government was now prepared to enter into negotiations with the Akali leadership through Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Bhai Jodh Singh, the main stumbling block was the Akali stand with regard to the Maharaja of Nabha. Though the Government was willing to allow the Akalis to complete the interrupted Akhand Path on certain conditions, it insisted that the Akali leadership must altogether drop the question of the restoration of the Maharaja.[107] This the Akali leadership was not prepared to do at that stage. Another difficulty was the time needed to complete the Akhand Path at Jaito and the number of persons who could be allowed to enter the precincts of the Gurdwara for this purpose. While the Administrator was willing to allow a maximum number of 1,000 persons to enter Nabha, he felt that the long period of ten months that was needed to complete 101 Akhand Paths could not be allowed on political grounds.[108]

While the Nabha authorities and the Akali leadership were busy negotiating over the various issues, the passage, in the meantime, of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bills, automatically settled the Jaito and other issues. With regard to the Nabha Affair, Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Panjab, made the following declaration:

> The Administrator of Nabha will permit bands of pilgrims to proceed for religious worship to the Gangsar Gurdwara under the following rules:
>
> (a) That they abstain from holding political Diwans or spreading political propaganda during their sojourn within the state boundaries;
>
> (b) that they confine themselves to the use of the Gurdwara itself and such reasonable space around it as may be set apart for their accommodation;
>
> (c) that they will be self-supporting during their visit, the village and Mandi of Jaito being excluded from the area set apart for their accommodation;
>
> (d) that any such band will arrive at Jaito by rail or by a road decided upon by the Administrator and that suitable arrangements shall have been made to ensure that any such

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

band of pilgrims will be unaccompanied by any sangat or following;

(e) and that the date of arrival of any such band at Jaito is communicated to the Administrator in order to enable him to make suitable arrangements in connection with the same....[109]

After the passage of the Bill, Bhai Jodh Singh, Sardar Narain Singh and other Sikh Members of the Legislative Council met the Akali leaders in jail and obtained their approval of the Bill and stopping of Jathas to Bhai Pheru and Jaito. Bhai Jodh Singh arranged with Mr. Wilson Johnston, the Administrator of Nabha, for the completion of the Akhand Paths at Jaito. The first Jatha, consisting among others the Udasi and Nirmala Sadhus, left Akal Takhat under the leadership of Bhai Jodh Singh and arrived at Jaito on 21 July, 1925.[110] Another Jatha arrived from Delhi the same day. On 27 July 1925, more Jathas reached Jaito after being released from the Nabha Beers and other jails. The deadlock finally ended with the Akalis completing their 101 Akhand Paths on 6 August 1925.[111]

While the passage of the Bill helped to settle the question of the resumption of the disrupted Path, the main issue, i.e., the restoration of the Maharaja, still remained unsettled. When the Akali leadership approached Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders for guidance and help in the Nabha Affair, the Mahatma replied that he could interest himself in the Jaito morcha only if the Akalis separated the political question regarding the restoration of the Maharaja from the religious question for the restoration of the Akhand Path. He also demanded a written statement from the Maharaja stating that 'all the writings were practically extorted from him' and that he was prepared to face all the consequences resulting from an agitation for his restoration.[112] In the event of the desired statement being given to him, the Mahatma promised to launch a powerful all-India agitation for the restoration of the Maharaja in which 'the Akalis were merely to assist in the elucidation of facts'.[113]

In view of Mahatma Gandhi's advice, the Working Committee of the S.G.P.C. sent a deputation[114] to Dehra Dun to meet the Maharaja and to obtain the required statement. From the report of Raja Singh, the leader of the deputation, one learns that the Maharaja first tried to avoid the S.G.P.C. representatives and 'concealed himself in the bathroom'.[115] When with great efforts, the deputation managed to secure an interview with the Maharaja

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

and requested from him a written statement stating that his abdication was not voluntary and asked for a copy of his representation to the Viceroy, the Maharaja first tried to put them off with excuses and finally said, 'No'.[116] When Raja Singh argued that it was difficult for the S.G.P.C. to proceed further without at least one of the two documents, the Maharaja initially complained of having been badly treated by the Akalis and then said: 'Then why not leave the Nabha question'.[117]

Malcolm Hailey in a letter dated 3 March 1924 to Sir Edward Maclagan, drew attention to the danger arising from the general demand for some form of enquiry. This demand, he pointed out, had been made by national leaders and some Members of the Legislative Assembly, many of whom had seen the confidential documents relating to the Maharaja's abdication and were convinced that he had been forced to abdicate.[118]

The refusal of the Maharaja to give the required statement to the S.G.P.C. and his public dissociation with the Akalis and their agitation further weakened the position of those Akali leaders who still wanted to carry on the struggle for his restoration. Whatever might have been the facts of his case, the Maharaja had at that stage, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'made it practically impossible for his well-wishers to carry on an effective agitation for his restoration'.[119]

However, it is interesting to note that when in July 1925 the Maharaja learned that the majority of the Akali leaders in the Lahore Fort Jail were prepared to give an undertaking to the Government to work for the Gurdwara Bill and to drop the Nabha question[120] to get the Bill passed, he made a forceful appeal to the Akalis not to accept the Bill. In a long note in chaste Urdu (in Gurmukhi script) written at the time of the passage of the Bill, the Maharaja accused the Akalis of being 'treacherous and unfaithful' to him like his earlier advisers. He exhorted the Akali leadership not to give up the issue of his restoration as, in his words:

> the result of the Akalis dropping the Nabha issue would be that the officials after some time, finding a suitable opportunity would crush me to pieces, would take me to Burma or somewhere else to intern me for the remaining part of my life and would kill me and my family with all types of tortures....[121]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The Maharaja was for once to prove partly right for soon after the passage of the Bill and the dropping of the Nabha question by the Akali leadership, he was suddenly removed from Dehra Dun to far-off Kodai Kanal in the South India to spend the remaining part of his life in virtual exile till his death on 14 December 1942.

Patiala and Other Sikh States' Measures Against the Akali Movement

Of all the Sikh princes who offered their co-operation and loyal services to the British Government in combating 'the dangerous Sikh Movement', Bhupinder Singh of Patiala played the most conspicuous role. He was the most influential Sikh prince, ruling the biggest Phoolkian State with an area of over 7,500 sq. metres.[122] While in his own State he was notorious for his autocratic ways, oppressive administration, personal debauchery and the suppression of popular political aspirations,[123] with the British officials he wielded remarkable influence. Because of his staunch support, loyalty and co-operation, the British officials heaped a spate of titles on him.[124] As an ultra-loyalist Bhupinder Singh came out in open support of the Government during the Akali agitation of the twenties. He also organised anti-Akali propaganda machinery with the help of the landlords, Zaildars, Sufedposhs, military pensioners and other loyalists and vested interests in the Panjab.[125]

Apart from his anxiety to please his British patrons, the fact that the S.G.P.C. and other nationalist forces were supporting the cause of his political rival, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, made him particularly enthusiastic in his anti-Akali campaign. Even before the British authorities could approach him for help, he visited Delhi to meet the Viceroy. In the course of his meeting, he advised Lord Reading to influence the moderates among the Akali leadership so as to separate the issue of the Gurdwara reform from the political propaganda of the Akali leadership. While emphasising his loyalty to the Crown, he warned the authorities against the recalcitrant attitude and independent nature of the Maharaja of Nabha.

Bhupinder Singh came out in open support of the authorities by lending the services of his troops, C.I.D. and civil officials, and by organising counter propaganda to combat the Akali agitation over the forced abdication of Ripudaman Singh. The history of

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

his secret services to the Paramount Power in suppressing popular movements in his State was already quite lengthy. During the Ghadr activities in 1914, Bhupinder Singh helped the Government considerably by 'arresting some of the dangerous America-returned emigrants...and interning such of them as were residing in Patiala State'.[126] Again, during the days of Martial Law in the Panjab, Patiala rendered assistance to the Government in the form of 'protecting communications, guarding railway lines, and in co-operation with the Panjab C.I.D. in arresting S.S. Caveeshar and Master Mota Singh—two leading Sikh extremists'.[127]

Right from the inception of the Akali Movement until its finale, and even afterwards, the Maharaja did his best to ease the situation for the British officials and to win over the loyalists. When, in the early twenties, discontent over the official control of the management of the Golden Temple and other important Sikh shrines was brewing, the Maharaja 'used influence with the Sikh community in bringing about a settlement of the question of the control of the Gurdwaras'.[128] The Maharaja exerted himself under the advice and with the approval of the British authorities. In consultation with the Governor of the Panjab, he proposed a Gurdwara Managing Committee of 36 members, mainly loyalists. However, the extremists did not accept the proposal and formed a bigger and more representative committee of their own choice.[129] Thus, the first attempt of the Maharaja of Patiala to please the authorities and to ensure indirect official control over the Sikh shrines was not successful. Although he again offered his services 'to set the matter right', the authorities seem to have realised by that time that in the face of popular opposition, the Maharaja's manoeuvres were of little avail. His offer was, therefore, declined.[130]

However, neither the opposition from the Sikh masses nor the non-acceptance of his 'offer of loyal services' by the British Government could discourage the Maharaja. Prior to the Nankana tragedy the Maharaja had made an unsuccessful attempt to bring about some sort of settlement between Mahant Narain Das and the Akali leadership.[131] He also 'furnished the Panjab Government with a note containing his views on the question of the control of Gurdwaras and explained to Sir Edward Maclagan his solution to the problem. After the Nankana tragedy, when the Panjab Government had adopted a 'strong policy towards the Akali movement', the Maharaja proclaimed his open support for the official measures of suppression.[132]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

During the Akali agitation over the 'Keys Affair' he offered his help and cooperation to the Government.[133] The Prime Minister of Patiala State and the Political Agent to the Governor-General had a meeting with the Governor of the Panjab and suggested to him various measures to tackle the Akali agitation.[134] But the Panjab Government did not pay much attention to the suggestions of Patiala State and handed over the keys to Sardar Kharak Singh, President of the S.G.P.C.

After having failed to crush the Akali agitation by force, the Government decided to create dissension in the Akali camp. For this purpose, the services of the Maharaja were fully utilised in organising anti-Akali propaganda. Editors and printers of newspapers were paid handsome allowances by Patiala State to carry on effective propaganda against the Akali Movement. The Maharaja also helped the Government in the formation of the Sikh Sudhar and Zail Committees composed of loyalists, government pensioners, and other vested interests to boost anti-Akali feeling in the rural areas. Through these organisations, the Maharaja tried to dissuade prospective volunteers from the rural areas from joining the Akali ranks. The Maharaja was also used by the authorities to influence the moderates in the Akali leadership to separate the religious reform movement from the political agitation. The Patiala plan in this connection was 'to secure the majority of such members in the S.G.P.C. as would prefer to do purely religious work without opposing the Government'.[135]

The Maharaja issued special proclamations barring the State subjects from enlisting in Akali Jathas or collecting funds for the movement and authorising the State police to take strong action against those sympathising with the Akali reformers. He organised a parallel Gurdwara Committee with adequate staff and liberal financial backing to prevent the Gurdwaras in his State from passing into Akali control.

In December 1921, when the Akali Movement was at its zenith and the Akalis had planned to take control of the Gurdwara at Fatehgarh Sahib (in Patiala State), 'the Maharaja paid a personal visit at the time of the *Shahidi Jormela* and checkmated the efforts of the extremist Akalis'[136]

In the matter of the arrests of extremists like Master Mota Singh and Bijla Singh, Patiala State rendered positive help to the Panjab C.I.D. Both these extremists were persuaded by Patiala State to

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

surrender themselves, were paid liberal allowances, and were then used to weaken the Akali Movement.[137] It was with the help of Master Mota Singh and Bijla Singh that Babu Sant Singh and Ram Singh, two amongst the most important members of the Babbar Akali group, were arrested by the Panjab police. The Patiala officials claimed that 'the State informers passed most accurate and timely information to the Panjab C.I.D. and did the direct work in the imperial interests in rounding up the Babbar terrorists'.[138]

However, the most important role that Patiala played against the Akali Movement was during the agitation over the abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha and the resultant Akali struggle at Jaito. The Maharaja actively participated in the special conference convened by the Government of India on 25 July 1923 to coordinate the efforts of the Panjab Government and the Sikh States.

After the conference. the Maharaja and his Prime Minister returned to Patiala and augmented the existing police and administrative resources to meet the situation resulting from the march of the Akali Jathas to Jaito. Additional police and military forces were recruited, the Patiala C.I.D. was overhauled and provided with the latest equipment and training and changes were effected in the personnel of the Department. A Shahi Farman was issued in August 1923 which forbade all seditious activities against the Patiala Raj and the British Government. Armed with the Farman, the State police arrested all important persons suspected of having delivered inflammatory and seditious speeches at Diwans in various parts of the State. They were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, fines and confiscation of property.

However, this policy of repression did not succeed fully. Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala,[139] who was a mainspring of the Akali struggle in the Sikh States, renewed his activities with added enthusiasm. He organised a huge Diwan in his village at Thikriwala at which the Maharaja was condemned for his alliance with the British authorities in suppressing the Akali Movement. Bhupinder Singh ordered his police to proceed immediately to Thikriwala and put a stop to the activities of Sewa Singh and others. The Patiala police clamped Section 144 on the village and arrested the organisers of the Diwan who were planning to take out a procession to the adjoining villages to protest against the activities of the Maharaja.[140] As a reaction to the police action, the villagers of Thikriwala staged a dharna in front of the Tehsil office at Barnala. According to

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

an eyewitness, the villagers left the place only after being given a firm assurance by the Superintendent of Police and the Nazim that the people arrested in connection with the Akali activities would be released before dusk of the following day.[141] The arrested leaders were released by the State authorities the next morning, and were taken in procession from the city of Barnala to the Akali headquarters at Thikriwala.[142] Actually the activities of the Akalis emboldened the peasantry of the State and created an awakening among them. The threats of the police officials and the Shahi Farmans of the Maharaja could no longer check them from expressing their resentment against British imperialism and its supporters—the Sikh Princes.[143] Undaunted by the Maharaja's threats, Sewa Singh Thikriwala further broadened the scope of Akali activities in Patiala State by starting a Panjabi daily, *Kaumi Dard*, to counteract the State propaganda. Like its counterparts in the Panjab, Sewa Singh's paper greatly helped the movement in the Sikh States by disseminating the Akali ideology to the peasantry and thereby strengthening the Akali organisation.[144]

During the struggle at Jaito while the authorities in the Panjab tried to curb the growing Akali activities by declaring the S.G.P.C., the Shromani Akali Dal and allied organisations as 'unlawful associations', Patiala State took collateral measures against the Akalis in its jurisdiction. A fresh notification was issued by the Home Minister of Patiala, 'prohibiting the Patiala subjects from associating with the Shahidi Jathas at Jaito...'.[145] Sewa Singh Thikriwala was again arrested along with other Akalis in the State and held in the Karkhas Jail at Patiala. Here he was subjected to all types of threats, intimidation and allurements to dissociate himself from the Akali leadership. According to a contemporary: 'the Maharaja promised Sewa Singh that he would hand over the control of all the Gurdwaras in Patiala State to him if he agreed to sever his connections with the Akali leadership'. On Sewa Singh's refusal, the Maharaja ordered him to be sent to the Lahore Fort Jail along with other important Akali leaders.[146]

While the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill was being discussed in the Panjab Legislative Council, the Maharaja tried to weaken the authority of the Akali leadership as he feared that after securing official recognition of their control over various Sikh shrines, the reformers might direct all their energies against him for his opposition to their movement. In his letter to the Governor of the Panjab,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

he expressed his fear of a reflex action prejudicial to his State and opposed the official recognition of the S.G.P.C. or the creation of a strong Central Board as provided in the Bill.[147] When he failed to persuade the authorities to exclude the Central Board from the provisions of the Bill and the Government gave statutory recognition to the S.G.P.C., the Maharaja begged for adequate representation in the Central Board. In this connection, it is interesting to note that while the Maharaja wanted 'adequate representation' on the Central Board, he did not want all the provisions of the elected management to be applied to the Gurdwaras in his own State. The Government, however could promise no concession to the Maharaja in the face of vocal public opinion against him.

Measures of repression against the Akalis and their sympathisers were also adopted by the rulers of other Sikh States. The Phoolkian State of Jind,[148] though located far from the scene of Akali morchas at Jaito, could not escape their impact. The subjects of the Jind State arranged special Akali Diwans. Apart from passing resolutions of sympathy and support to the Akali Movement, these Diwans criticised the sensual pursuits of the ruler and his entourage. As pointed out earlier, the Chief Minister of Jind also attended the special conference held at Delhi on 25 July 1923 to evolve a joint plan of action by the Sikh States to meet the Akali challenge. Like Patiala, the Jind Durbar also issued Farmans ordering the prosecution of those taking part in the anti-Government propaganda and confiscation of their properties. These royal orders, however, failed to check the Akali activities in Jind State, and, on the contrary, lent further impetus to the anti-Government and anti-ruler feelings and activities among the people.[149] In fact the Akali activities assumed wider ramifications after the Praja Mandal and the Tenants Movement joined hands with the Akalis.[150] The States of Kapurthala and Faridkot followed more or less the same policy towards the Akali Movement. The rulers of these States also took strong measures against the Akalis in their respective areas and tried to help the British authorities by preventing their subjects from swelling the ranks of the Akali Jathas.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

5

The Organisation, Base and Leadership of the Movement

Formation of the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

The rising tempo of the struggle for reform and the ever-increasing number of shrines coming under the control of the reformers necessitated the formation of a central representative body of the Sikhs to organise and coordinate the work of reform at different levels. The need for such a body became imperative when the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat at Amritsar and two other important Sikh shrines came under the control of the Akali reformers on 12 October 1920.[1] It was realised that in the absence of any organised and carefully delineated line of action the reformers might be carried away by their zeal leading to irresponsibility, confusion and organisational anarchy.

The emerging Akali leadership rose to the occasion and summoned a general assembly of Sikhs of all shades of opinion on 15 November 1920, in front of the Akal Takhat for the purpose of electing a representative Committee of the Sikhs to control the Golden Temple, the Akal Takhat and other Gurdwaras which had lately come under Akali control.[2] This move of the Akali leadership seems once more to have alarmed the authorities in the Panjab who felt that such a body would 'surrender to the advocates of ultra-Sikhism.'[3] The Government of the Panjab, which was already in touch with the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Viceroy of India and Members of his Council seeking guidelines regarding a future line of action, decided to forestall the proposed gathering and announced a provisional Advisory Committee of its own after consulting Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala.[4] This committee, which was composed chiefly of reformers of moderate views and other loyalist elements, was obviously an attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to retain control of the Sikh shrines. But the reform party was not to be hoodwinked. It held the general assembly as originally planned on 15-16 November 1920, which was attended by over 10,000 Sikh representatives from all over the country.[5] It expressed its disapproval of the 36 member Advisory Committee appointed by the Government on the ground that its Members were nominated by the Government without reference to the Panth and declared that it was, therefore, not representative in character. The assembly elected a bigger committee of its own consisting of 175 members and named it as 'The Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee' (S.G.P.C.).[6] To avoid any controversy with the moderates, all the 36 members of the earlier official committee were also included in the enlarged committee.

It was on 12 December 1920, that the newly elected members of the committee met at the Akal Takhat, Amritsar and after having gone through the formal ceremony of scrutiny at the hands of the *Panj Piaras*, the committee was declared duly inaugurated.[7] Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia became the first President of the committee while Sardar Harbans Singh Attari and Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia became Vice-President and Secretary respectively.[8] At the same meeting a sub-committee of 72 members was formed to draft new rules and regulations for the administration of the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Except for the priests of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat, who had reason to be unhappy because of being deprived of their lucrative offices, all other parties seem to have been satisfied with the new arrangement.[9] The Government noticed with satisfaction the personnel of its Presidency and executives, all of whom were known for their moderate and compromising attitude with regard to the Akali movement, and were staunch supporters of the British administration. Because of the domination of the moderate and pro-Government elements in the newly formed S.G.P.C., the movement of reform launched by it seems to have aroused no official hostility. Official circles noted with satisfaction that the movement was 'proceeding on constitutional lines.'[10] But by the end of 1920, the situation took a new turn.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

In early 1921 some of the most vocal Akali Jathedars, especially Kartar Singh Jhabbar and Teja Singh of Chuharkana, renewed the earlier campaign for liberating the Gurdwaras from evil influences.[11] Under the impact of Mahatma Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation, the religious Diwans arranged by the Akali leadership became the centres of religio-political propaganda among the rural classes of the Sikh community. Official circles noticed this sudden change with great consternation.[12]

Since religious enthusiasm and awakening were nursed by the Akali reformers through the press and platform, the Gurdwara reform soon became the dominant issue in the province. According to confidential reports, '...the committee of Sikhs originally appointed at Amritsar to deliberate on the management of the Golden Temple was moved by its enthusiasm for the Sikh cause to enter a new and more comprehensive sphere of activity and eventually emerged as the S.G.P.C., the professed objects of which were to obtain control over all the Gurdwaras and religious institutions and to provide for their management on lines acceptable to the Sikh nation.'[13]

In the wake of the tragedy at Nankana, the official involvement in the affair and the policy of repression that followed, the influence of the moderates among the Akali leadership eclipsed. At a meeting held on 20 March 1921, the S.G.P.C. demanded the passage of suitable legislation to secure the redemption of all Gurdwaras and release of all the prisoners convicted in connection with the reform movement, failing which the community was to take recourse to non-cooperation.[14]

The threatened recourse to non-cooperation greatly upset the authorities who were already finding it difficult to meet the challenge of Congress non-cooperation and the Khilafat agitation in the province. The bureaucracy had hitherto been successfully using the Sikh leadership and soldiers to check the advance of nationalism in the province and to combat the Congress and Khilafat volunteers. Addition to the ranks of the Volunteer Movement of the 'fanatic' Akalis caused greater concern to the authorities than the Civil Disobedience campaign of Mahatma Gandhi.[15] In a bid to dissuade the Akali leadership from taking a radical step, the Government issued a communique explaining its attitude towards the reform movement.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

However, the communique failed to convince even the moderates among the reformers, who were by now fully disillusioned with promises of help and sympathy by the Government. With the extremists and non-cooperators, who understood the double-standards being applied by the official machinery, the communique failed to make any appeal at all. The British officials who expected loyalty and cooperation from the Sikhs in return for their 'practical sympathy and material assistance in the past', were, instead, faced with a formal resolution in favour of non-cooperation and passive resistance.[16]

The position of the extremists and non-cooperators was further strengthened as a result of fresh elections to the S.G.P.C. held in July 1921 under the new constitution prepared and approved by the earlier committee in October 1920. The new constitution provided that four-fifths of the members were to be elected from different constituencies from the province and the Sikh States and one-fifth to be nominated by the elected members.[17] The issue of reform of the Gurdwaras and feelings against the Mahants and the bureaucracy dominated during the elections. In the rising wave of reform and nationalism, it was but natural for the extremist elements to make a clean sweep at the elections and outstrip the moderates. Although some moderates were later included in the new committee through nominations, they no longer had an effective influence with the leadership. The new committee elected Sardar Kharak Singh[18] (a professed non-cooperator and a close associate of the Congress, the Central Sikh League, and other nationalist organisations in the country) as its President. An Executive Committee of 31 members consisting 'almost entirely of professed non-cooperators', a Working Committee of 7 members and Local Committees for the management of the Golden Temple and Nankana Sahib were also formed.[19]

The policy of repression following the Nankana tragedy, the application of the Seditious Meetings Act to the 18 districts in the province, the general arrests of the supporters and sympathisers of the Akali Movement and open support to the Mahants by the bureaucracy made the new leadership broaden the base of their struggle against the authorities by enlisting the active support of the nationalist forces.[20] It was for this reason that an active liaison was established between the S.G.P.C. and other nationalist organisations like the Indian National Congress, the Khilafat Party and the Central Sikh League. The Congress, besides passing formal resolutions in

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

support of the Akali Movement, rendered active help to the Akalis by sending Congress leaders and volunteers to help them organise their propaganda machinery.[21] The Khilafat Conference, the Muslim League and the Central Sikh League also passed resolutions of sympathy and support for the Akali cause.[22]

With the growing Akali agitation, especially after the 'Keys Affair' and during the struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh, the leaders felt the need to streamline their propaganda machinery to refute the official misrepresentations about the Akalis. An Information and Publicity Bureau was set up in February 1923 from which daily communiques were issued. Besides carrying important news items about the movement, they often refuted the official communiques, statements and other orders, challenged the misrepresentation of facts about the Akali Movement and generally gave their version of events. Copies of the communiques were sent to nationalist papers in the country, leaders of the Indian National Congress, the Khilafat, the Sikh League, Sikh Members of the Panjab Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly and other prominent bodies and individuals sympathetic to the Akali cause. On going through the various communiques and their reaction on the native press and general public in the province, one finds that the Publicity Bureau of the S.G.P.C played an important role in building up a strong public opinion, a factor vital to the success of any popular movement.[23]

The Akali leadership was fully alive to the important role of the press in the success of their movement. Besides enlisting the active support and sympathy of some of the important nationalist papers in the country like *The Independent*, *Swarajya*, *Tribune*, *Liberal*, *Kesri*, *Milap*, *Zamindar*, *Bande Matram*, etc., the Akali leadership started two vernacular dailies, *The Akali* and the *Akali -te-Pardesi*.[24] Well-known Akali radicals like Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, Sardar Mangal Singh, Sardar Hari Singh and Master Tara Singh managed these papers in one capacity or the other. The two dailies played an important role, first in bringing about the necessary awakening among the Sikh masses and then preparing them to undertake the struggle for reform. As the movement gathered strength, the papers helped the Akali leadership by explaining their stand and by exposing official distortions. Apart from their general appeal to the Sikh masses, bold editorials of the two dailies, made a deep impression on the Sikh masses.[25]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Although the nationalist English dailies in the Panjab and outside were helping to publicise the Akali programme to a great extent, the Akali leadership nevertheless felt the need for an English daily of its own. In 1924 they succeeded in starting the Hindustan Times, New Delhi with K.M.Panikkar as the Editor.[26] The S.G.P.C. also acquired, in August 1923, an interest in *The Nation* of Lahore. Some leading members of the S.G.P.C. joined the company that owned this paper and Mehtab Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Mangal Singh, Teja Singh Samundari, Giani Sher Singh and Bhag Singh joined its Board of Directors.[26]

Having thus established its organisational machinery on a sound footing and having created a suitable climate for reform through press and platform, the S.G.P.C. next set about broadening the base of the movement by establishing a closer liaison with the Shromani Akali Dal. Before proceeding further with the programme of the S.G.P.C., it will be useful at this point to pause and make a brief study of the Shromani Akali Dal and various Akali Jathas affiliated to it.

The Shromani Akali Dal

While the S.G.P.C. provided the Akali Movement a well-knit organisation, the Shromani Akali Dal furnished it with a solid base of activists in the form of various Jathas functioning under its control and also with the leadership to carry on the actual struggle for reform. Though some of the local Jathas had come into existence much before the organisation of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal and had been carrying on the work of reform in their respective areas, a central organisation to undertake their unification and coordination was established on 14 December 1920, under the name of the 'Shromani Akali Dal'.[27] Technically speaking, the Shromani Akali Dal and the bands of Akali volunteers under its control were supposed to work in the general framework decided by the organisational wing, the S.G.P.C., but in actual practice the Akali militants more often than not disregarded its overriding authority. They often overstepped the limits fixed by the S.G.P.C.[28] Consequently, the Shromani Akali Dal, instead of being grouped in the category of subordinate organisations of the S.G.P.C., developed a separate identity of its own working on more or less similar lines for the achievement of a common goal.[29]

Though the Akalis[30] during the Gurdwara reform movement appeared in typical dress during the summer of 1920, the history

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of their origin and growth is much older than that of the Akali Movement. With the beginning of the reform movement in the twentieth century, the Akalis seem to have staged a come-back, but with a difference; the new order had little in common with the old. As the Akalis had for a long period of time been the custodians of the Sikh temples and were known for the sacrifices they made to preserve the ceremonial purity, the word 'Akali' came to be regarded as a symbol of purity and strict morality. Thus all those Sikhs who advocated reform in the Sikh shrines and were prepared to suffer like the old Akalis to achieve their object, came to be called 'Akalis'. Unlike their predecessors they were not violent but accepted non-violence as their creed. In spite of the repeated assurances of the Akali leadership that they would work towards their objective in a non-violent, peaceful manner, official circles, it seems, failed to be convinced. The officials feared that since Akalis had martial traditions and history behind them, they would not be able to restrain themselves for long. Hence, the emergence of the Akali Jathas to take up the work of Gurdwara reform was viewed with great concern in official circles in the Panjab and Delhi.[31]

In the beginning there was no organised system for the recruitment of Akali volunteers. All those Sikhs who were desirous of joining the ranks of the reformers and were prepared to make sacrifices for the Akali cause, became Akalis. Later, when the movement gained momentum, a regular system for the recruitment to the Akali ranks was started. Akali Jathedars and preachers from the Akali headquarters would often go to the villages and arrange religio-political Diwans in which they would explain the objectives of the movement for Gurdwara reform. They would point out the need for purifying their religious places and liberating them from the control of the Mahants, and would urge their audience to come forward to undertake this important mission. All those who volunteered to join the Akali ranks were grouped in smaller Jathas named either after the areas they belonged to or after some prominent Sikh personage. An influential local volunteer was generally appointed their Jathedar.[32]

In the summer of 1920, when the struggle for reform intensified, a number of prominent Sikh agitators came forward to take part in the movement. As the tempo of reform quickened and the struggle took a definite shape, individual efforts of the Akalis were supplanted by those of the well-defined Jathas of reformers. The first effort at concerted action was made when at a Diwan organised by the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Central Sikh League at Tarn Taran in July 1920, Amar Singh Jhabbal appealed to the audience to get themselves enrolled as Shahids for the repair of the wall of Gurdwara Rakabganj, Delhi.[33] According to official reports 'some 70 to 80 Akalis volunteered themselves to be enrolled as Shahids at this Diwan.'[34] Soon the figure in the State rose to well over 700, including some Hindu and Muslim Shahids.[35] As the object for which the Shahids were recruited had already been achieved when the Government of India had the demolished wall of the Gurdwara rebuilt, the efforts and energies of the volunteers were now directed towards the movement of reform in important Sikh Gurdwaras. After some initial successes, Amar Singh Jhabbal instituted a regular system for the enlistment of Akali volunteers with the assistance of his brother Jaswant Singh Jhabbal, Teja Singh Bhuchar and other leaders whose duty was to carry on the struggle for reform at Nankana and other places.[36]

Perhaps Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar was the first Akali leader to form a Jatha to undertake the work of reform in the shrines at Nankana. It was on 24 December 1920 that some prominent Akali workers of the area met at the Gurdwara of Maharani Nakain at Sheikhupura and formed the first ever Akali Jatha which was named Akali Jatha Khara Sauda Bar and Jhabbar became its Jathedar.[37] The formation of similar Jathas found favour in other Sikh districts and soon they began to appear all over the Central Panjab. By the time the Akali leadership launched its struggle against the Government, first over the 'Keys Issue' and later at Guru-ka-Bagh, the following prominent Jathas were already in existence to implement their programmes:

1. The *Doaba Jatha*, comprising Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts of the Panjab and Kapurthala State with Piara Singh of Langeri as its Jathedar and the numerical strength of the Jatha was nearly 3,000.

2. The *Khalsa Diwan Malwa*, or the *Ranjit Khalsa Malwa Jatha*, with jurisdiction extending over the Ludhiana and Ambala Districts of the Panjab and the Patiala State with Arjan Singh as Jathedar. Its headquarters were at Sekha (Patiala State) and strength nearly 1,200.

3. The *Harbir Akali Jatha* of Kapurthala State with Bishan Singh of Kapurthala as its Jathedar and its strength being nearly 2,000.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

4. The *Nirbhai Akali Dal*, with Sewa Singh of Khanger and Gajjan Singh as Jathedars. The Jatha had the same jurisdiction as that of Jatha No. 2. Its headquarters were at Ludhiana and strength over 2,000.
5. The *Gargaj Akali Jatha*, with Teja Singh Bhuchar as Jathedar and headquarters at Tarn Taran. It commanded influence in the Majha tract and had a numerical strength of nearly 1,500.
6. The *Khalsa Central Majha Diwan* also known as the *Shiromani Panth Milauni Jatha* with headquarters at Kirtangarh, Police Station Sadar, Amritsar, was managed by *Panj Piaras* and had a numerical strength of nearly 1,200.
7. The *Guru Ram Das Jatha* with headquarters earlier at Ram Das but later at Guru-ka-Bagh (Ajnala) with Amar Singh Jhabbal as its leader. This Jatha had about 500 members.
8. The *Shahidi Diwan Bar Dharowali*, with headquarters at Dharowali (District Sheikhupura) and Sangat Singh as Jathedar. Its influence extended over Sheikhupura.
9. The *Akali Dal Khara Sauda Bar* with Kartar Singh Jhabbar as its Jathedar and Sacha Sauda, District Sheikhupura, as its headquarters. Its influence was strongest in the jurisdiction of Police Station Chuharkana and Sheikhupura. Its numerical strength was about 2,200.
10. The *Lyallpur Jatha*, with a membership of about 3,000 and Tripat Singh as Jathedar, had four sections, one each in every tehsil of the district.[38]

The Akali Fauj

In addition to the above local Jathas, a central force of Akali volunteers called the Akali Fauj was also organised under the direct supervision of the S.G.P.C. The C.I.D. officials described this new institution as 'a Sikh reproduction of the widespread Volunteer Movement of the Congress'.[39] The Akali Fauj was planned as an organisation of selfless Sikh volunteers prepared to sacrifice their lives at the call of the Akali leadership for the cause of religious reform. That the response from the Sikh masses was more than encouraging is evident from the fact that the original target of 10,000 volunteers having been quickly reached, it had to be raised to 30,000.[40] Unlike other Akali Jathas, they had their headquarters at Amritsar itself and were

in close touch with the S.G.P.C. The Fauj organised house to house collection of funds, payment and ration for the volunteers. It also performed the routine administrative chores of shrines under the control of local Akali Jathas.

Unlike other Jathas, the Akali Fauj functioned on military lines, marched in fours, wore badges, carried flags and organised camps. According to C.I.D. reports, though actual evidence of the bigger formations was not available, there was reason to believe that at least battalion formations existed in the Panjab and there was evidence of the existence of a kind of 'Staff' organisation. According to these reports, the arms of the Fauj comprised swords,[41] battle-axes and cudgels and a limited number of firearms, mostly sporting guns obtained by licence holders (retired Sikh soldiers). The authorities believed that a large number of old pistols had been obtained by the Akali extremists from their counterparts outside India for the Akali Fauj.[42]

Of all the Akali Jathas the one that worried the authorities most was the Akali Fauj. It enjoyed the solid backing of the extreme left-wing Sikh League, and was constituted along the lines of the Volunteer Movement of the Congress and the Khilafat whom the Akali volunteers might join. What unnerved the authorities most was 'the spirit of fanaticism' among the Akali volunteers.[43]

Other factors which added to the worries of the authorities were the reports from the Army sources of attempts by the Akali Fauj to tamper with the loyalty of Sikh soldiers in the Indian Army,[44] and its increasing popularity with the Sikh peasantry.

The degree of success which the Akali Jathas had achieved in their respective areas and the strength they had come to acquire was realised by the authorities all the more when after the Nankana tragedy the charge of the Gurdwara Janam Asthan was taken over by the Military and the entry of all Akalis to Nankana was blocked. At that time, Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar at the head of Jathas of 2,200 Akalis marched from Sacha Sauda to take possession of the Gurdwara Janam Asthan. Defying all restrictions, he reached the place where the Deputy Commissioner of Sheikhupura and the Commissioner of Lahore Division were stationed and took away the keys of the shrine from them virtually at gun point.[45] The C.I.D. officials reported that S.G.P.C.'s efforts to convert the Akali Fauj into a disciplined and organised body of national volunteers met with considerable success. They quoted

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

some instances of an effective liaison between the top leadership and the smallest organisational units in the villages. The alacrity with which the Working Committee of the S.G.P.C. and hundreds of Akali volunteers from different Jathas had assembled at Teja Gurdwara[46] (in Gurdaspur District); the speed with which the Akalis had poured into Amritsar on the occasion of the seizure of the keys of the Durbar Sahib treasury, and the manner in which the contemplated action of the Government to declare the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Jathas unlawful associations had come to be known to the Akali leadership much before the official announcement on 12 October 1923, were instances quoted by a C.I.D. official in the Panjab as being clear indications of their efficient organisation.[47]

The efficiency of the organisational wing and the perfect rapport between the top leadership and the base of the movement in the form of various Jathas that were displayed on the occassion of the Puran-Mashi Mela at Nankana in November 1921 was described by C.I.D. and other officials present as 'even more instructive'.[48]

Composition of the Akali Jathas

A perusal of the confidential reports, military reports, registers of the Akali Jathas in the personal collection of Dr.Ganda Singh at Patiala, records of the S.G.P.C. at Amritsar and the official abstract showing the numerical strength of the Akali Jathas shows that the bulk of the Akali volunteers came from the Sikh peasantry—especially from the Districts of Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Amritsar, Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. Thus out of a total of 15,506 Akali volunteers in different areas in early 1922 (these figures are incomplete as Akali volunteers from the Sikh States and South-East and South-West of the then Panjab are not included) the number of Jat Sikhs was 10,200 or almost 66 per cent of the total. Rawalpindi division provided the highest proportion of non-agriculturist (mainly traders) Akali volunteers (1,269 out of a total of 2,907). Next to them, low caste agricultural labourers and other rural non-Jats made up 2,399 volunteers. 1,270 volunteers were Military pensioners and discharged soldiers. Returned emigrants numbered 248. In Rawalpindi District, where the majority of Akali volunteers consisted of educated Khatri Sikhs, the work of organisation was well-defined and regular committees were appointed for the issue of directives. Every member of the Jatha was instructed

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in his duties and his relationship with the higher organisational machinery was clearly defined. A similar system prevailed among the Akali Jathas of the affluent Bar ilaqa where the proportion of literates was higher.[49]

It is evident that the Sikh peasantry constituted the backbone of the Akali Movement and was mainly responsible for the movement's spectacular success. The Sikh peasantry, which was growing increasingly discontented with the Government for a number of reasons, with their ranks swelled by soldiers discharged at the end of the First World War, quickly responded to the Akali propagandists' contention that the bureaucracy was bent upon destroying the Sikh religion.

While the bulk of the Akali volunteers came from the Sikh peasantry, leadership was provided by the educated middle-class nationalists consisting of barristers, vakils, college and school teachers, headmasters, military pensioners and middle-level landlords. Their educational background, their environment, their political consciousness as a result of their association with the nationalist organisations of the time, and above all, their ability and boldness to expose the evil practices of the hereditary Mahants in the Sikh shrines made them more acceptable to the Sikh masses than their so-called national leaders who had been rejected for being loyal to the Government.

This analysis of the composition of the Akali Jathas and also the following Table contradict the official allegations that 'generally speaking it was only the good-for-nothing man who had nothing to lose, who joined the Akalis, and 95 per cent of them were composed of Tarkhans, Lohars and the lesser Jats....'[50]

In fact such official statements were attempts on the part of the bureaucracy to weaken the movement and to alienate from it the sympathy of the middle-level Sikh agriculturists. It is interesting to note the contrast between the figure of 95 per cent menials in the Jathas as given out to the public and 15 percent admitted in the confidential memorandum prepared for use by the higher authorities.

By the time the Panjab Government implemented its new policy of two-pronged attack on the Akali leadership by creating division among the Akali ranks through the pro-British and loyal elements and by suppressing the top leadership under the pretext of maintenance of law and order, the Akali leadership had not only

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

geared up its organisational machinery and established regular liaison with the nationalist forces in the country but had also greatly strengthened its base by establishing a regular link between the various Akali Jathas and by constituting an Akali Fauj. Thus, by the time agitation over the 'Keys' issue started, the Akali leadership was fully prepared to meet the official challenge. Akali successes over the 'Keys' issue and their struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh greatly enhanced the prestige of the S.G.P.C.

The power and prestige of the S.G.P.C. were further enhanced by continued material and moral support from the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs in the Panjab, and through the backing of the national leaders in the country. Mass support from the Sikh peasantry and the sympathies of the rank and file of the Sikhs and military pensioners made the S.G.P.C. aware of the important position it had come to occupy. Realisation of the hardships undergone by the community, martyrdom suffered by nearly 150 reformers at Tarn Taran, Nankana, Guru-ka-Bagh, Panja Sahib and other places, injuries sustained by over 1,500 persons, harsh sentences meted out to over 5,600 others and long terms of imprisonment and heavy fines suffered by the top leadership created great resentment against the British rule. In the face of such feelings, the Akali leadership could not think of responding to the official offer of restoration of the old friendship.[51]

In the field of Gurdwara reform the S.G.P.C. had travelled a long road in the brief span of three years (1920 to 1923). From the elimination of corruption, which was the main demand during the earlier phase of the Akali Movement, the S.G.P.C. had gone on to demand (after the Nankana tragedy) the removal of the very institution of the Mahants. Finally during the later phase of the movement (Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito) the S.G.P.C. demanded not only the removal of the Mahants but also of the foreign Government which was held responsible for the evils in the system of Gurdwara management.

After the successful demonstration of the doctrine of non-violent non-cooperation during their struggle over the issue of the 'Keys' and later at Guru-ka-Bagh, the S.G.P.C. leadership was captured by extremists and non-cooperators to whom the cause of religious reform was little different from that of national freedom.[52] After declining the initial offer of Gurdwara legislation which the new leadership thought was inadequate to meet the demands of

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

ABSTRACT SHOWING THE NUMERICAL STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE AKALI DAL*

Tract of country	*S. No. of District*	*District*	*No. of Akalis*	*Jats*	*Menials*	*Other than Jats and Menials*	*Returned emigrants*	*Military pensioners*	*Discharged soldiers*	*Convicted bad characters*	*Month in which Akali enumeration took place*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Eastern Punjab (mixed papulation)	1	Ambala	159	134	23	2	—	1	2	?	December 1921
Malwa Tract	2	Ludhiana	672	521	151	—	31	102	138	?	December
(Preponderantly Sikh population)	3	Hoshiarpur	1,058	944	114	—	28	73	75	?	November-December
	4	Jullundur	916	749	167	—	73	74	74	?	
	5	Ferozepur	446	344	102	—	27	25	55	?	December
Manjha Tract (preponderantly Sikh population)	6	Gurdaspur	909	650	259	—	3	34	48	5	..
	7	Amritsar	1,363	1,108	255	—	33	90	62	79	December
	8	Lahore	1,722	912	587	223	39	15	70	183	December-January

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Rechna Doab (Sikhs strongly represented)	9	Sheikhupura	2,198	1,445	250	503	3	—	65	67	January
	10	Gujranwala	444	171	88	185	2	—	23	53	January-February
	11	Sialkot	720	495	80	145	—	37	48	?	January
Canal Colonies (mixed population)	12	Lyallpur	3,148	2,358	274	516	4	54	63	84	January-February
	13	Montgomery	138	— 28	46	64	—	—	—	—	December-January
Rawalpindi Division (Muhammadan population predominant)	14	Gujrat	314	313	1	—	1	3	—	?	January
	15	Jhelum	526	—	—	526	—	3	5	?	January
	16	Shahpur	191	28	2	161	—	1	1	?	December
	17	Rawalpindi	582	—	—	582	4	2	27	?	December-January
			15,506	10,200	2,399	2,907	248	(1,270)		?	

*The above Abstract is copied from the *Confidential Memorandum* in File No. 459-II/1922. The figures in the Abstract do not mention the number of Akali volunteers from the Sikh States and South-East and South-West of the Panjab. The total number of Akali volunteers was very much in excess of the figures given above and had exceeded 25,000 according to the S.G.P.C. records.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the Sikhs, they decided to continue their struggle for reform with the object of obtaining complete control over their shrines, and to wage a political battle against the foreign bureaucracy. It was mainly with the latter object that the extremists in the S.G.P.C. took up the question of the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha in spite of the objections of some of its members who argued that it was a 'political issue' and should not be taken up by the movement for religious reform. But the extremists who then dominated the S.G.P.C. carried the day with the argument that any issue was good enough to give a fight to the bureaucracy. A new front was, thus, opened at Jaito in the Nabha State.

The enhanced power and prestige of the S.G.P.C., its hold on the Sikh masses, particularly the soldiers, pensioners and peasantry, and the increasing popularity of the Akali Fauj worried the authorities both in India and in England. Reports were already being sent by the C.I.D. officials in the Panjab to the effect that the movement had drifted towards politics and that the Akalis were working for the restoration of the Sikh Raj under the cover of a religious movement.[53] The S.G.P.C.'s decision to take up the question of the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha was quoted by these officials as a solid instance to substantiate their argument. The officials felt that the deposition of the Maharaja had no relation to the problem of Gurdwaras and had no possible religious significance, and was, instead, 'a challenge, on a purely secular issue, to the authority of the Government.'[54]

The possibility of disarming the Akali Fauj and clamping a ban on the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal was contemplated as early as February 1922.[55] In a note to the Viceroy dated 18 February 1922, W.H. Vincent, the Home Member, suggested that the only effective solution of the Sikh problem was 'to proclaim the Akali Dal unlawful and disperse by the use of force many meetings together with the prosecution of leaders'.[56]

But this suggestion of the Home Member of the Government of India could not be implemented immediately for lack of sufficient evidence against the Committee. It was suggested that the object of arresting the whole S.G.P.C. could be achieved by enforcing the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (of 1918). But such an action, in the opinion of the Viceroy, 'was open to very strong objection' as the S.G.P.C. had been 'recognised as the religious authority of practically the whole Sikh community'.[57] The Viceroy

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

advised that 'the proper course for the Panjab Government in his view is to make the Bill operative with as little delay as possible'.[58] But the Bill, which had been earlier passed by the Panjab Legislative Council with the support of official and a few non-official members, could not be implemented in the face of opposition by the majority of non-official members of the Council and the Akali leadership.[59]

Official circles viewed with concern the Akali leadership's rejection of the Bill, the growing struggle at the Guru-ka-Bagh and the lack of space in the jails to accommodate the increasing number of Akali prisoners. The activities of the Babbar Akalis[60] in the Jullundur Doab and the terror they created among the loyalist and pro-Government elements in the Panjab villages added further to the worries of the higher authorities in India. In order to allay the fears of the Secretary of State for India in London, the Government of India sent him optimistic reports about the Akali situation.[61] But the real facts had already reached London through the Indian representatives of some of the dailies of England. They reported the Akali struggle as a victory for the non-cooperation movement in India and warned the authorities in London of growing unhappiness of the Indian public with the British Government in India and their increasing support and sympathy for the Akalis.[62] Censure of the unreasonable policy of the authorities in India by the press and Members of Parliament in England and the unofficial reports from India of the increasing number of political murders in the Doaba area by the Babbar militants alarmed the Secretary of State, which is evident from his letter to the Viceroy, 'The newspaper telegrams have been rather alarmist and seem to suggest that the trouble is spreading...'[63] In yet another telegram, dated 18 October 1922, he enquired 'whether an effective stop could be put to the operations by the arrest and prosecution of all the organisers (of the Akali Movement) as abettors.'[64]

This telegram revived the earlier controversy about declaring the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal to be unlawful associations. On inviting the opinion of the Government of the Panjab in late October 1922, the authorities in the Government of India were informed by the Chief Secretary of the Panjab Government that though the principal members of the S.G.P.C. had already been arrested and were under trial, the arrest of all the members, as suggested by the Secretary of State, was not possible for obvious reasons.[65]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The suggestion of the Secretary of State that the whole of the Akali organisation be proclaimed unlawful being thus postponed for the time being, the authorities busied themselves in wooing the Akali leadership again to seek their approval of the legislation on the Gurdwara question. On the failure of this move, steps were taken to collect sufficient evidence against the committee to facilitate alternative action against it. As discussed in detail in Chapter 7 (Gurdwara Legislation), the Akali leadership, because of the success of their movement, showed no interest to compromise with the authorities and the idea of a legislative solution found no response. The authorities then resorted to the alternative plan of proclaiming the whole of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal to be unlawful associations. The officials in the Panjab felt that the Akali involvement in the Nabha affair could be safely used as an incontrovertible instance of the movement's drift towards politics. This and other arguments were described by the officials as 'sufficient evidence' to prove that the S.G.P.C. and the Jathas under it were 'organisations of disorder, working towards treasonable ends'.[66]

'Sufficient evidence' having been thus collected, the authorities in the Panjab found in the Akali Jathas' march to Nabha a convenient excuse to implement the advice of the Secretary of State to put an effective stop to the Akali operations by the 'arrest and prosecution of all the organisers as abettors.'[67] The S.G.P.C. was charged with having 'openly encouraged bodies of Akalis to invade Nabha State with the object of intimidating Government and to interfere with the maintenance of law and order'.[68] An order was issued by the Home Department of the Government of the Panjab on 12 October 1923, declaring the S.G.P.C., the Shromani Akali Dal and various Jathas organised by or affiliated to this body as 'unlawful associations'.[69]

It seems that the S.G.P.C., through its own system of intelligence, had come to know about the contemplated action much earlier than the date of its implementation. This is evident from the perusal of a comprehensive resolution in five parts which the S.G.P.C. passed at its meeting on 29 September 1923. Part III of the resolution warned the Sikh community about the contemplated action in the following words:

> Whereas constant (sic)' reports are rife to the effect that the Government is contemplating to carry out wholesale and

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

> simultaneous arrests of all Sikh public workers in the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal, and to stop the Gurdwara movement and upset the Panthic management of Gurdwaras by declaring these bodies as illegal associations, and gagging Sikh national press, therefore, the S.G.P.C. wants to reassure the Panth that by the grace of the Guru it is prepared to receive the blow and contemplates the threatened attack with equanimity.[70]

The resolution further declared that in case the contemplated action was implemented, '...the S.G.P.C. will strictly adhere to the settled policy of non-violence, will keep united, faithfully follow the lines chalked out by the committee and keep up the struggle for God and Guru with vigour and determination by all peaceful and legitimate means, till complete religious liberty is established.'[71]

In consequence of the Panjab Government's order to the local officials to carry out the scheme of mass arrests of the Akali leadership, all the sixty members of the Interim Committee of the S.G.P.C. were arrested and tried for 'treason against the King Emperor'.[72] Security arrangements in Amritsar were tightened, machine-guns placed at all the main gates of the city and the Army posted at important centres of Akali activity. The atmosphere was charged with tension, reminiscent of the days of Martial Law. Sir John Maynard's earlier dictum 'Cut off the head, the body will fall automatically' became a current one those days. It seems that in taking action against the Akali leadership the officials in the Panjab were not only acting upon the advice of the Secretary of State for India but were literally following Sir John's dictum. In their effort 'to cut off the head' and thus paralyse the Akali activities not only the members of the Interim Committee were arrested but also the office staff.[73]

But the official action did not prove an effective weapon and failed to check the activities of the Akalis. The places of those arrested were soon occupied by others and the organisation continued to function uninterrupted. The leaders in jail at Amritsar continued to be in touch with the new leaders outside through a secret system of their own. All efforts to check the flow of news of the movement and secret correspondence between the leaders inside and outside proved fruitless. On receiving reports about the regular contact between the Akali leaders in and out of jails, the local Government changed its earlier decision of trying these prisoners

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in Amritsar in the court of a Special Magistrate, Mr. Henderson, and shifted them to the Lahore Fort which was converted into a special jail with a judicial court inside. Here these leaders were tried under section 120, 121-A and 17 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. Except for two important leaders, Kharak Singh and Mangal Singh, who were already undergoing various terms of imprisonment, all the remaining members of the Interim Committee were charged with 'treason against the King-Emperor' and awarded different terms of imprisonment.[74] The authorities failed to achieve their objective. A new committee of 62 members came into existence in place of the one arrested by the Government on the night of 13 October. the onward march of the Akali Movement continued. Contrary to the expectation of the Government, the new committee adopted an even more aggressive tone in its criticism of the official policy. In defiance of the official order of 12 October declaring the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Jathas to be 'unlawful associations', the committee, which held a meeting of its Executive on 4 November 1923. passed the following resolutions:

(i) This new Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. lays on record its firm conviction after careful consideration that it is the duty of every Sikh to protect these religious rights for the defence of which the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal, the representative bodies of the nation, have been declared unlawful by the Government. The new Executive Committee declares its firm and unalterable determination to uphold these rights.

(ii) The new Executive Committee believes firmly that the Government by declaring the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal as unlawful has levelled a mean attack against the sacred right of association in regard to Sikh religious matters and this meeting expresses its sense of disgust at this attitude of the Government.[75]

The Executive Committee also condemned the official action in arresting the paid clerical staff of the S.G.P.C. and expressed its 'sense of disgust at the Government having descended to such measures to crush the non-violent S.G.P.C.'[76]

Reacting to this defiance of the official proclamations, the Government decided to take strong action against the new committee also. After confirming the C.I.D. reports that this committee was in session at the Akal Takhat and was busy discussing the Nabha

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Affair—a prohibited issue—the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Mr. F.H. Puckle, and the Superintendent of Police, Mr. R.C. Jeffreys, with a body of 100 armed policemen in uniform reached Akal Takhat by a back entrance through the Thara Sahib on the afternoon of 7 January 1924.[77] According to an S.G.P.C. communique it was for the first time that the police in uniform and with their shoes on had tried to enter the holy precincts of the Durbar Sahib.[78] Bhai Jodh Singh is said to have advised the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police not to enter the Akal Takhat and instead to ask by name for the leaders they wanted to arrest. He assured them that the leaders concerned would present themselves at the local police station as they had been doing in the past.[79] The Deputy Commissioner did not agree to this suggestion and ordered the police to proceed with the arrests by forcible entry into the Akal Takhat. On this the Akalis, who had meanwhile gathered in sufficient numbers, formed a solid wall and blocked the entrance. The Superintendent and his party tried to break through but were pushed back.[80] According to the official version of the incident, 'the police encountered resistance from a large crowd of Akali *sewadars* and were roughly handled'.[81] Finding that it was not possible to enter the Akal Takhat the officials now agreed to act on the earlier suggestion of Bhai Jodh Singh. The Superintendent of police handed over to Bhai Jodh Singh a list of the persons wanted by the police and was advised by the latter to wait outside for their arrival.[82]

By the time Bhai Jodh Singh arrived with the official list, the committee had finished discussing most of the items on the agenda and had passed resolutions condemning the official action in declaring the S.G.P.C. as an unlawful association, appreciating the sacrifices made by the members of the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal, congratulating them 'for their sterling services to the Panth', and describing the official action in stopping the Akhand Path at Jaito as 'the greatest insult to the Sikh Panth'. The committee had also decided to hold 101 Akhand Paths in place of the one disrupted by the Nabha State officials and authorised its Executive 'to deal with the situation and protect the honour of the Sikh religion'.[83]

After completing their work all the 62 members of the new Interim Committee came down from the upper storey of the Akal Takhat and after offering prayers there went out to the Clock Tower to court arrests where the Superintendent of Police and his party

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

were waiting for them.[84] These leaders were tried under Section 17(2) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act in the court of the First Class Magistrate at Amritsar. Leaving aside two members—Rattan Singh Azad and Niranjan Singh Tansen—who were acquitted, the remaining leaders, following the decided policy of non-cooperation, neither admitted to any charges nor defended themselves. In the judgement, 57 of them were convicted under Section 17(2) and awarded varying terms of imprisonment.

The arrest of the new committee also failed to achieve its objective. The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar admitted in private that the authorities had failed to make a sudden entry at the Akal Takhat and to give the Akali leaders a surprise. The officials also failed to carry out the arrests themselves so as to establish moral supremacy over the Akalis. This, as Mr.Puckle wrote to H.D. Craik, 'was a victory for the Akalis at the Akal Takhat in that they prevented the forces of the Government from accomplishing their purpose.'[85]

After the arrest of the second Interim Committee, a third Committee succeeded it. The new Committee again held a conference to challenge the authority of the Government and to defy its orders. This committee was also arrested. But, instead of its members being tried in the courts and awarded punishments, they were shortly afterwards released on the pleas that they were not prominent leaders of the movement.

Implementation of the advice of the Secretary of State and the tactics of the new Governor, Sir Malcolm Hailey, failed to achieve any tangible results. Arrests of the three successive committees and leaders of the allied organisations could not curb the movement. The official action against the Akali leadership became the object of intense criticism in the native press. The *Akali* warned the authorities that declaring the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal to be 'unlawful associations' and by ordering the arrests of the three successive Interim Committees, 'the Government has so to say admitted the whole Panth to be seditious'.[86] In another issue the paper wrote, 'if the thought of liberty, plain speaking and national *Jathabandi* constitutes rebellion, all Sikhs are rebels...'[87] Identical opinions were expressed by other nationalist papers also.

In the bazaars of Amritsar the Akalis moved in a defiant mood yelling, 'we are the members of an unlawful association, we are rebels....'[88] But the authorities failed to check their activities. Rattan Singh Azad, who had earlier been arrested in the second committee

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

but later acquitted, wrote a book entitled *Baagi Sikh ke Sarkar* (Who is the Rebel—the Sikhs or the Government?),[89] in which he taunted the Viceroy, Lord Reading: 'Has your weapon gone blunt? Is it not a violation of the rules that the members of the Shromani Akali Dal are not being arrested?' He further wrote that 'in spite of the Government's orders to prosecute the papers publishing S.G.P.C.'s communiques, no editor, printer or publisher is being arrested'.[90] After thus failing to achieve their object by force and diplomacy, the authorities were compelled to open a fresh dialogue with the S.G.P.C. for an acceptable solution of the Akali problem which resulted in the passage of the Sikh Gurdwara and Shrines Bill in July 1925.

When the members of the Central Board elected under the provisions of the above-mentioned Bill met in the Town Hall, Amritsar, on 2 October 1926, they decided to rename the Board the 'Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee'. Wisdom seems then to have supervened. The Panjab Government withdrew its orders declaring the S.G.P.C. and other Akali organs 'unlawful associations', and recognised the S.G.P.C. as a representative body of the Sikhs.[91]

In making the Panjab Government agree to the acceptance of the S.G.P.C. as the sole body for the control of the Sikh shrines, the Akali leadership undoubtedly scored a victory over the bureaucracy. But the conditions imposed for the release of the Akali prisoners and serious differences of opinion and ultimate division among the ranks of the Akali leadership over the working of the Act made this triumph ring hollow.

In his Address to the Panjab Legislative Council on 9 July 1925, Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor, while making a reference to the appeals of Sikh Members of the Council for a general amnesty to all the Akali prisoners, remarked that though 'the appeal is powerful and the Government has considered it with every sympathy' it was not possible 'to agree to a general or unconditional amnesty'.[92] Hailey seems to have realised that such an action would be interpreted as another victory for the Akalis and the nationalist forces in the country. On the other hand, in imposing conditions on their release that they would work the Bill and would not use force in taking possession of the shrines in future, and thus creating divisions in the Akali ranks (as in fact later happened) he thought that would not only render negative the victory of the Akalis but also achieve the object of extricating the Government from an untenable

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

situation. This he indicated in one of his casual talks, 'Why delay the Bill and let the Government get the blame? Give it to them, and also their Gurdwaras. They will then quarrel among themselves and the Government will be free to do something else.'[93] In granting the Akalis the Bill and also the Gurdwaras, Hailey had achieved the first part of his goal. The second to observe them quarrelling which in fact was more important to the Government, was yet to be achieved. Hailey, who had better knowledge about the Sikhs and the Sikh leadership, thought diplomacy and Machiavellian tactics were the best weapon to trounce the Akali leadership. Just two days after the passage of the Bill, he declared:

> The Panjab Government will release (or will withdraw from the prosecution) any person (other than those persons who have been convicted of or are under trial for crimes of violence or incitement to such crimes) who has been convicted by the Criminal Court or is under trial in such courts, on charges arising out of the recent agitation in the Sikh community, or on charges involving offences against the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act.[94]

His declaration not only defined the categories of prisoners to be still detained but imposed further conditions on the release of the first category:

> Provided that such release will be conditional on such persons signing an undertaking that they will obey the provisions of the law recently enacted securing to the Sikh community the control and management of shrines and their endowments and will not seek, by means of force, or show of force, or by criminal trespass to gain control or possession of any shrine or the property attached to it or its endowments.[95]

Perusal of a large number of statements, letters and other correspondence exchanged between the Akali leaders in the Lahore Fort Jail and others outside on the issue of the conditions for release indicates that Hailey succeeded not only in preventing the Akali leadership from claiming another victory against the Government but also in breaking the united front which they had always presented in the past. Out of the 36 important Akali leaders in the Lahore Fort Jail, only 19 were prepared to assure the Government that

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

they would work the Bill. But even these leaders made it clear that their acceptance to work the Bill should not be interpreted as their willingness to sign a written undertaking or accept conditions on their release.[96] Therefore, they added the following matter to the earlier statement in which they appealed the Panth to work the Bill whole-heartedly: 'But we wish to make it perfectly clear that we are not prepared to give any undertaking as a condition of our release'.[97] Other leaders numbering 13 altogether opposed even this move while the remaining refused to make any definite promise as long as they were in jail. In a letter from the Lahore Fort Jail dated 25 July 1925, Sardar Gurcharan Singh and others wrote to Sardar Mangal Singh that the action of the 19 leaders in giving a written statement assuring the working of the Bill 'was dangerous to the welfare of the community and will create a split in our camp'.[98] In another urgent letter, dated 5 August 1925, these leaders expressed concern at the rumours that the leadership was in favour of creating two separate parties—one for working the Act and the other to oppose it. These leaders described this rumoured policy as 'very dangerous and against all principles of morality'.[99]

The fears of these leaders regarding the split in the Akali ranks were confirmed when the General Committee of the S.G.P.C. at a meeting on 4 October 1925 to consider its reaction towards the Gurdwara Act, found itself divided into three different camps: the first party favoured accepting the Gurdwara Act and ending all action without waiting for the release of the Akali prisoners, the second wanted to reject the Act unless the Government released the Akali prisoners unconditionally, and the third was for postponing the decision on the question till the detailed rules under the Act were published.[100] Nevertheless, the Committee carried resolutions approving the action of the Working Committee in suspending the morcha at Bhai Pheru, expressing satisfaction at the successful termination of the Akhand Path at Jaito and advising the Panth to accept the Act and work it whole-heartedly.[101]

This development was to the entire satisfaction of the official circles.[102] Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, congratulated Hailey on his successful handling of the Sikh problem. Acceptance of the conditional release by most of the moderate leaders in jail on giving written or verbal undertakings to work the Act and refusal by the extremists like Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh, Teja Singh Samundri and others further widened the breach

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in the Akali camp and was considered a feather in Hailey's cap. S.B. Mehtab Singh, Giani Sher Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh and other moderates after their conditional release captured the leadership of the S.G.P.C. formed under the Gurdwara Act of 1925. Later, Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and other extremists came out of jail without giving any verbal or written undertaking and started a strong agitation against the 'Sardar Bahadur Party' of the moderates. Efforts were made in early 1926 to bring about a rapprochement between the two wings of the Akali leadership and both the parties agreed to arbitration.

The arbitrators presented their written decision on 6 June 1926 which was read out to the representatives of both the parties the next day at the Akal Takhat, Amritsar. The arbitrators observed that 'there was no need to give an undertaking for a conditional release but these members were helpless'.[103] Though both factions agreed to abide by the decision and apparently patched up their differences with the 'extremists regretting their attacks on the moderates' and the latter apologising for having procured conditional release,[104] the later history, further details of which are not within the scope of the present work,[105] shows that real unity was never again achieved. Thus the Akalis acquired the Bill and also their Gurdwaras, but lost the dynamic spirit that had brought success to their movement. The sense of unity, cooperation, mutual trust and self-sacrifice were to be taken for granted no more. Power-politics with its concomitants became a poor legacy of this great movement. Losing sight of their original aims of reform of the Sikh shrines and advancement of the Sikhs in educational, religious and social spheres, the Akali leadership became enmeshed in mutual wrangles. Never again has it regained similar power and prestige as it enjoyed during the heyday of the Akali Movement.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

6

The Babbar Akali Movement

The Babbar Akali Movement had its inception at a time when the peaceful Akali struggle for Gurdwara reform was passing through a crucial stage. The militant spirit of the Panjabis which had lay dormant since the suppression of the Ghadr movement was resuscitated when the radical section of the Akali reformers, disillusioned with the Gandhian weapon of passive suffering, organised themselves into separate militant groups popularly known as the 'Chakarvarti Dals', and later the Babbar Akali Jathas. As the Akali Movement gathered strength and popularity, the Mahants, the landed aristocracy and other vested interests begged for material and moral support from the British officials in the province. With the Government of the Panjab openly backing the vested interests in the Sikh shrines, opposition to the movement of Gurdwara reform stiffened. Encouraged by the official backing the Mahants of important shrines like Nankana, Tarn Taran and Guru-ka-Bagh abandoned their earlier attitude of compromise and began making hectic preparations to finish the zealous reformers. This resulted in the massacre of the Akalis at Tarn Taran, Panja Sahib and culminated in the tragic blood-bath at Nankana in February 1921.

The militant group, which included a large number of returned emigrants, Ghadrites and retired and demobilised soldiers, was bitter at the imperialist policies of British Government and their measures of repression against popular movements. They were also unhappy

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

their measures of repression against popular movements. They were also unhappy with the Congress leadership and the Gandhian weapon of non-violent non-cooperation, which they felt was an attempt to bridle the struggle of the peasants against imperialism. The tragedy of Nankana and the official support to the Mahants further disillusioned them with the Akali leadership and their method of non-violent satyagraha. Rejecting the peaceful struggle for reform in the Sikh shrines as also the Gandhian weapon of passive suffering as 'unworkable', these zealots decided to part company with the dominant Akali leadership in order to organise a militant movement of their own.

The break-away wing made its first formal appearance during the Sikh Educational Conference held at Hoshiarpur on 19-21 March 1921. Later they organised a separate meeting on 21 May 1921. The meeting was attended among others by Master Mota Singh, Kishan Singh, Amar Singh, Tota Singh Peshawari, Gurbachan Singh and Buttan Singh and a number of returned emigrants from Canada. According to a C.I.D. report, the following definite programme was agreed upon:

1. To create a rising in the Patiala State;
2. To endeavour to get into touch with the Bolsheviks across the Frontier and to arrange an outbreak on the Frontier which should synchronise with the outbreak in Patiala.
3. To foment trouble in Central Panjab.
4. To collect men, arms and ammunition; and
5. To eliminate certain officials and non-officials condemned as enemies of the Khalsa Panth.[2]

It was decided that those responsible for the massacre of the Akalis at Nankana should be assassinated. Militant leaders argued that such an action was necessary in order to teach a lesson to the toadies and to demonstrate to the Government that self-respect and revolutionary spirit was very much alive in the Sikh community. It was felt that Mr. C.M. King, the Commissioner of Lahore Division, J.W. Bowring the Superintendent of Police, Mahants Devi Dass and Basant Dass, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Baba Kartar Singh Bedi were responsible for the Nankana massacre and should therefore be assassinated.[3]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

In the emergence of the militant group among the Akalis the revolutionary spirit of the Ghadrites seems to have been resurrected. Like the Ghadrites, the sphere of the Babbar Akali activities was also confined mainly to the two districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.[4] Many of the Babbar Akalis were returned emigrants and used 0.32 calibre revolvers and Mauser pistols which the Ghadrites had used earlier. Like the Ghadrites, the Babbars were alleged to have established a regular liaison with the revolutionary movements outside the country. Officialdom in the Panjab believed that 'they received large sums of money for revolutionary propaganda from their counterparts still in America and Canada.'[5] Finally, again like the Ghadrites, the new group of revolutionary terrorists moved from place to place explaining their viewpoint to the people in the province. After making an appeal to the martial instincts of the Sikhs and stressing the inefficacy of the Akali leadership's peaceful approach, the Babbars urged the people to resort to arms.[6]

Through the medium of religious Diwans and by distributing articles and leaflets, the Babbars created a degree of discontent among the rural population of the Jullundur Doab. In one of their leaflets the Babbars made the following passionate appeal to the people of the Doaba to rise in rebellion against the foreigners:

> As the Indian movement has subsided, the Tenth Guru has, therefore, in his infinite mercy, sent the Babbar to help the nation out of its critical situation. The Babbar will make his appearance in the Doaba where the Sikh army stands drawn up in battle array. He will expose the secret of the *feringhees* who will shriek with pain.

The paper further called upon the readers to:

> bring about anarchy by means of *Khanda* (double-edged sword), cut down the foreigner and purge the land of sinful deeds...and burn the police stations, plunder the treasuries, place gun powder under the railway lines, raid the magazines, steal arms and sing the song of liberty.

The paper called upon the Hindus and the Muslims to join the Khalsa in their war against the foreigner and adopt the creed of violence as this alone will bring the final victory.[7]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

In pursuit of their programme, the Babbars sent Tota Singh Peshawari to the North-West Frontier to procure arms and ammunition.[8] According to official reports they were able to acquire a small collection of assorted weapons and ammunition. After obtaining necessary arms, Bela Singh and Ganda Singh were deputed to murder Mr. J.W. Bowring for his alleged involvement in the Nankana tragedy. The two visited Lahore on 23 May 1921, but had to return disappointed on discovering that Mr. Bowring was out of the town on that day. While moving about carelessly on the Lahore railway station, they were suspected by the police and arrested. In the course of their interrogation the two divulged the whole conspiracy. As a result, many other members of the group including Amar Singh, Narain Singh, Tota Singh, Chatar Singh, Chanchal Singh, Thakur Singh and Shankar Singh were arrested. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Master Mota Singh, Bijla Singh and Kishan Singh who had managed to dodge the police.[9]

The Akali leadership, on learning about the Babbar plan to murder those responsible for the Nankana massacre, exhorted the Sikhs not to associate themselves with the activities of the Babbars as the latter's programme clashed with the decided policy of non-violence adopted by the S.G.P.C.[10] But the Babbars continued their programme of reform through murders despite the open disavowal of their methods by the Akali leadership and the arrest of some of their colleagues.

The Babbar leaders claimed that they took a note of warning from the fact that the failure of the Ghadr movement was for lack of support by the people. They realised that before launching their struggle against the official machinery and its supporters, it was necessary to awaken the rural masses and to enlist their sympathy and support for the Babbar cause. It was with this object that a Jatha was organised in November 1921 which was to travel through different parts of the province and to arouse the people to revolt against the British Government. It was also planned to paralyse the supporters of the bureaucracy—the Zaildars, Sufedphoshs Lambardars, Patwaris, police informers and other toadies—by terrorising them through various forms of chastisement.[11]

After having prepared a tentative plan of action, Kishan Singh, the moving spirit behind the Babbar movement, announced a detailed programme in his speech at a mela held at village Mastuana (Jind State). By quoting from the *Zafar Namah* of Guru Gobind

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Singh he declared that it was legitimate to resort to arms when peaceful means had failed to achieve the object. At the above mentioned Diwan Karam Singh Babbar recited the following poem with a view to arouse the martial instincts of the Panjabis:

Khanda pakro shero akhe Babbar vangar
Khanda pakar san te lao, tej karo do dhar
Bin Khande na mile azadi, kehnda Babbar vangar
(Catch hold of the double-edged dagger
So the Babbar declares aloud,
Sharpen both its edges on the whetting stone
Without the dagger freedom cannot be won)[12]

At the same Diwan Kishan Singh announced his programme of 'reforming'[13] those responsible for the Nankana tragedy and other acts of cruelty against the Akali reformers.

Kishan Singh delivered similar speeches in various other parts of the province and exhorted the people to give up non-violence. He also won over Sant Kartar Singh, Babu Santa Singh, Master Mota Singh, Sunder Singh and other militants, and thus strengthened the Babbar organisation. Some old Ghadrites and emigrants, such as Karam Singh and Asa Singh, also joined the Babbar ranks. Kishan Singh is also said to have done some political work among the Sikh soldiers at Jullundur cantonment with a view to obtaining arms and ammunition.[14] Having thus strengthened the Babbar organisation. Kishan Singh intensified revolutionary propaganda among the Sikh peasantry. Some important Babbar leaders were placed in charge of various Jathas to organise conferences in different parts of the Panjab and the Sikh States.[15]

In August 1922, the organisational set-up of the Babbars developed a new vitality when a general meeting of the different Jathas was convened at Gojowal. Here a regular working committee of the Babbar Akali Party was elected with Kishan Singh as its Jathedar, Dalip Singh Gosal as Secretary and Baba Santa Singh as Treasurer. The meeting also decided to reinforce the propaganda machinery of the Babbar movement by starting a cyclostyled paper called *Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar* with Karam Singh Daultpur as its editor. He was asked to prepare a list of police informers. toadies and other Government agents with a view

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

to penalising them for their treacherous role in opposing the Babbar movement.[16] It was also decided to merge the various Jathas and to rename the organisation as the 'Babbar Akali Jathas'.[17]

The *Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar* which began appearing as a monthly from September 1922 regularly highlighted the desperate economic condition of the people and their exploitation at the hands of a foreign Government. It also drew the attention of the masses, particularly that of the Sikh peasantry, to the Akali Movement and pointed out the futility of the Akali programme of passive suffering. According to an official report the paper 'exhorted the Akalis to abandon the non-violent doctrines of the S.G.P.C. and called upon them to revolt, to kill the foreigners and to establish a free Government...' The report further states that the Babbar leaflet also 'incited the soldiers to murder their European Officers'.[18]

In spite of the Akali leadership's disavowal of the Babbar programme and their techniques and of the S.G.P.C.'s advice to the Sikhs to dissociate themselves from such dangerous doctrines, the Babbars seem to have attracted a large number of adherents from the Sikh peasantry of the Jullundur Doab. Encouraged by the favourable response, Kishan Singh summoned yet another meeting of the various Babbar Jathas on 25 December 1922 at Jassowal. It was attended by all prominent Babbars including Dalip Singh, Karam Singh and Santa Singh.[19] At the meeting Jathedar Kishan Singh indicated with satisfaction the favourable climate that had been created in the Doaba area as a result of the Babbar propaganda and stressed the need to put into practice the Babbar programme of 'reforming' the toadies. He also pointed out that such an action was necessary to forestall the official attempts to sabotage the Babbar organisation while it would help strike terror among pro-Government elements in the villages. The meeting unanimously decided to bring out the next issue of the *Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar* and to publish the Jatha's decision to 'reform' those who were assisting the authorities.

Within a short time, another meeting of the general body of the Babbar Jathas was called at Jassowal on 30-31 December 1922 in which the working committee announced the following important decisions:

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

i. The working committee alone was to decide when and by whom a particular toady was to be murdered. Members were advised not to initiate any arbitrary action in this regard;

ii. In case of a member coming across a toady all of a sudden. it was advisable to murder him after careful consideration;

iii. Belongings of the toadies were not to be removed without the prior instruction of the working committee. In case of a member coming across any valuables or money the same was to be passed on to the organisation for the purchase of necessary arms;

iv. Children of the toadies were not to be touched nor their women insulted in the course of the Babbar action against them;

v. Only those could remain members of the Babbar Jathas who were prepared to execute the orders of the working committee, giving up all other engagements;

vi. The earlier decision of chopping off the noses and ears of the toadies was to be replaced by the new decision to murder them as the former operation took a longer time and could be used as a constant reminder of the Babbars and was likely to cause hatred against them;

vii. Every murder was to be announced in a special leaflet in the name of two or three Babbars;

viii. While the members were forbidden to touch the belongings of innocent persons. it was considered legitimate to loot the property of the Government, the toadies and notorious money-lenders. All the wealth thus collected was to go to the Jathas' common fund for the purchase of arms and was not to be used for meeting personal needs of members.[20]

After giving detailed rules and chalking out careful plans, the Babbars were asked to start their work of 'reform'. As decided earlier at the meeting at Jassowal on 25 December, an attempt was made on the life of Arjan Singh, Patwari of Haripur, for his alleged help in the arrest of Master Mota Singh. but the attempt failed. The first actual victim of the Babbars was Bishan Singh, a retired official of the Canal Department, who was shot dead on 10 February 1923.[21]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The murder of Zaildar Bishan Singh and the reported decision of the Babbars to launch a programme of wholesale slaughter of toadies greatly alarmed the authorities. Besides sending more spies to the villages and reassuring the loyal elements of full official support, the Government also announced rewards for the arrest of Babbar leaders.[22] Villagers believed to be sympathetic to the Babbar cause were intimidated and harassed. Lambardars were asked to inform the police immediately in case they came across a Babbar or learned of his whereabouts.[23] With a view to counteracting the Babbar propaganda in the villages, Peace Councils and Sudhar Committees, composed of the Lambardars, Sufedposhes, Zaidars, etc., were organised. These committees pointed to the villagers the blessings of the British rule in the Panjab and described the British as having been specially blessed by the Sikh Gurus.[24] These associations further exhorted the villagers not to trust the Babbar propaganda and asked them to help the Government in effecting their arrests.[25]

The official measures against the Babbars and the subsequent arrests of some of the important organisers of the movement including Jathedar Kishan Singh, Master Mota Singh and Sunder Singh through betrayal by their relations or through information supplied by informers, seem to have actuated the rest of the Babbars to step up their programme of killing those responsible for the arrest of their leaders. There followed a series of assassinations. On 11 March 1923, Buta Singh Lambardar and his grandson were murdered in village Nangal Shaman of Jullundur district. On 19 March Labh Singh, an ex-mistri of the Police Training School, Phillaur, was shot dead in the Hoshiarpur district for his alleged help in the arrest of Jathedar Kishan Singh.[26] On 22 March, the Babbars issued an open letter addressed to the Governor in which they claimed the credit for these assassinations and threatened that other toadies would also meet the same fate.[27] Early in the morning of 27 March, Hazara Singh of Hoshiarpur district was killed. On 17 April, ex-Subedar Gainda Singh was shot dead in front of his house in Ghurial village for his active assistance to the police in the arrest of certain Babbars. On 27 May, Chaudhri Ralla Ram and his brother Ditta were killed in the Kaulgarh village in the Hoshiarpur district.[28]

The quick succession of murders created panic among the toadies and unnerved the authorities. The official account admitted that 'a number of village officials and other loyalists were in fear for

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

their lives and many of them expressed anxiety to resign their posts.'[29]

On the advice of the Deputy Commissioner of Jullundur, the D.I.G. of police deputed Khan Bahadur Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Superintendent of Police, C.I.D., to work in liaison with the Jullundur police and help control the situation in the area. In the report that Abdul Aziz sent to D.I.G., C.I.D., he furnished a detailed account of the assassinations committed by the Babbars and repeatedly pointed to the panic they had created in the villages. While commenting on the killing of Ralla and Ditta, he wrote:

> The most surprising fact in the outrage is that while the culprits stayed for about 1 1/2 hours and in the early part of the night when the whole village comprising about 100 houses was awake, not a single man came forward to the rescue of the victims, the neighbours shutting themselves in the houses. This was, I believe, due to the panic which had been created by the appearance of the desperate and notorious gang, some of whom were armed with fire-arms.[30]

The Government then took certain special measures to meet the Babbar challenge and to restore confidence among the loyalist elements in the affected areas. Special C.I.D. staff was deputed to assist the local police in their efforts to arrest the Babbar leaders. In addition to the investigating staff, a force of 50 regular police was moved to Jullundur, and the enrolment of a special force of 150, including 50 mounted men, was sanctioned. The police was supported and assisted by a military force of 250 Indian infantry and a squadron of the armoured cars. Aeroplanes were also flown occasionally over the affected areas scattering leaflets in order to restore confidence among the loyalist elements in the countryside. The Babbar Jathas were proclaimed an 'unlawful association' under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 1908.[31]

For ensuring quick arrests of the Babbar leaders, handsome rewards were announced and their relations were promised jagirs and cash prizes if they provided useful information. With the cooperation of their relatives some weak Babbars were also seduced to act as approvers and informers on their leaders. The case of Anup Singh was one important instance of such a betrayal and is worth describing in detail.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

On 31 August 1923, Karam Singh, Udai Singh, Bishan Singh and Anup Singh were travelling from village Domeli to Bubeli and were to stay at the latter till the afternoon. Anup Singh managed to inform the police and destroy the party's ammunition with the exception of a gun which Karam Singh carried with him.[32] On receiving the information the police proceeded to the spot. The Babbars, on noticing the police, rushed towards a Gurdwara across a small stream. Mr.Smith, the Superintendent of Police, who wanted to arrest the Babbars alive, tried to persuade them to surrender, but they refused to do so. Karam Singh, the only one with a gun, continued firing in order to keep the policemen at bay. As they entered the stream, the police opened fire and Karam Singh, Udai Singh, Mohinder Singh and Bishan Singh were seriously wounded.[33]

Dhanna Singh, another important Babbar leader, was similarly betrayed by one of his associates, Jawala Singh. Dhanna Singh who was sent to the village of Jawala Singh on 24 October 1923 to enquire about another Babbar leader, Dalip Singh Dhamia, decided to spend the night at Jawala Singh's place. When Dhanna Singh was fast asleep, Jawala Singh first damaged his weapons and then informed the police.[34] Mr. Horton, Superintendent of Police, Hoshiarpur, accompanied by Mr. Jenkin, Assistant Superintendent of Police, and a mixed guard numbering 38 officers and men, reached the spot at midnight of 25 October, 1923.[35] The house was surrounded and a party detailed to force open the front door. After a long struggle, Dhanna Singh was arrested and handcuffed. He was about to be searched when he made a violent jerk with his hands and exploded a bomb which he was carrying in his pocket. Dhanna Singh's right side was blown away and he died instantaneously. Of the police men standing around him, five were killed and another later died in the hospital. Mr. A.F. Horton, Mr. W.N.P. Jenkin, and with four inspectors were seriously injured. Later, Mr. Horton died of internal haemorrhage on the morning of 3 November 1923.[36]

Undeterred by the arrests and deaths of their important leaders, the Babbars continued their programme of killing the supporters of the bureaucracy. They also continued their earlier programme of preaching hatred for the British rule through press and platform and inciting the people to violence. In the official measures of repression in the Doaba for sympathy with the Babbar cause, they

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

found an argument to preach against inefficacy of the peaceful methods of the Akali leadership. Their paper incited the soldiers to murder their officers and called upon the people generally to kill the foreigners and establish a free Government.[37]

The threats made by the Babbar paper and numerous murders of toadies and Government officials caused considerable anxiety in official circles in London. Questions began to be raised by Members of the British Parliament about the deteriorating condition of law and order in the Panjab. The Government of the Panjab was criticised on the grounds that it was attaching too little importance to the movement and was reducing the strength of the police without good reasons.[38] Fears were also expressed about the safety of the British officials in India.

On 4 June 1923. Sir C. Yates drew the attention of the House of Commons to the Babbar programme of murdering all officers and killing every foreigner and wanted the Government to make a statement on the situation in the Panjab.[39] Again on 14 June 1923 a motion was tabled in the British Parliament about the seriousness of the Babbar Akali movement.[40] But as the Secretary of State for India did not have sufficient information except that which was contained in the fortnightly reports on the situation in the Panjab sent to the authorities in London, he shelved the issue on the plea that since the activities of the Babbars formed the basis of judicial proceedings against them it was not advisable to make a statement on the subject.[41] He also tried to allay the fears of the members about the safety of Europeans in the Panjab by quoting a letter from the Panjab Government in which various measures against the Babbars had been detailed.[42] In the meantime, he addressed an urgent telegram to the Government of India asking for a detailed history of the movement and suggesting more active steps to meet the Babbar challenge.[43]

The Panjab Government then adopted more stringent measures against the movement. Important Babbar hide-outs were located and raided. Simultaneous raids were carried out at Pandori Nijran, Kishanpur, Jassowal, Paragpur, Kot Fatuhi and Daulatpur.[44] As a result, 186 arrests were made including those of 25 persons suspected of complicity in murders. On the basis of the statements of the arrested Babbars as also the information supplied by those who had turned approvers, the police were able to trace and arrest the remaining Babbar leaders including Babu Santa Singh and Dalip

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Singh Dhamia.[45] On the basis of the documents recovered from the arrested Babbars, their cyclostyling machine was also confiscated. Thus by mid-June 1924, all the important Babbars had either been killed in police encounters or taken prisoners and the situation in the province brought under control.[46]

The Akali leadership and the national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi had not approved of the Babbar programme of violence and the secret murders of supporters of the Government. The S.G.P.C. had issued communiques exhorting the Sikhs to dissociate themselves with the activities of the Babbars as their programme clashed with the decided policy of peaceful agitation. Mahatma Gandhi, who did not approve at all of the revolutionary methods, had described these revolutionaries as 'misguided patriots', and emphasised that the secret murders committed by them were not acts of heroism.[47] This stand of the Akali and the nationalist leaders encouraged the British Government in its policy of repression of the Babbars and execution of their leaders. Some of the Babbar leaders alleged that the Akali leadership had struck a bargain with the Government, and in order to secure the release of the Akali prisoners it had allowed the Government a free hand in the matter of Babbar trials, sentences and execution. Master Mota Singh and Nau Jawan Sabha, therefore, charged the S.G.P.C. with 'giving a green signal to the Panjab Government for the execution of the Babbar Akalis.'[48]

The Babbars claim to have paid more attention to propaganda than had the Ghadrites whose movement had failed for want of necessary awakening among the masses in favour of a revolutionary programme. Through the medium of religious Diwans and cyclostyled leaflets they tried to enlist the support of the village peasantry for their cause who formed the majority of the participants in the Babbar movement. The movement was greatly sustained by the hatred among Sikh peasantry for British imperialism and its supporters. Babbar attacks on the money-lenders also explain their economic grievances and their contempt for this class which had been exploiting them to an equal extent. But their vision seems to have been limited. Instead of murdering a few Zaildars, Lambardars, police-informers and money-lenders and thus limiting the scope of their revolutionary programme, they could have fared much better if they had organised the peasantry on the basis of their economic grievances against the feudal system and its prompter,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the British Government, and thus built a stronger and wider democratic front against British imperialism in India.

Though the Akali leadership disowned both the Babbars as also their methods and went even to the extent of passing formal resolutions against them, the Babbars' contribution to the Akali Movement cannot be ignored. They increased the bargaining power of the Akali leadership by terrorising the bureaucratic machinery and its supporters in the Panjab and thus compelling the Government to come to terms with them. The Babbars equally contributed to the weakening of the opposition by vested interests in the villages to the Akali Movement by announcing their plan of murdering all those responsible for the Nankana tragedy and by actually assassinating some of the loyalists who had helped the authorities in the province.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

7

The Gurdwara Legislation and the Finale

The Panjab Government's policy with regard to legislative measures for the control of the Sikh shrines has at least four marked phases. The first phase begins with the commencement of the movement of reform and covers incidents prior to the tragedy at Nankana. In the first place, the Government seems to have failed to realise the magnitude of the problem, and consciously or unconsciously, chose to adopt a policy of non-interference. This is the impression given by a study of the lengthy correspondence between the Government of India (in the Home Political Department) and the Government of the Panjab with regard to their policy towards the Akali Movement.[1] When the Viceroy of India called for an explanation from the Panjab Government for its failure to intervene in the Nankana affair and to avert the tragedy that followed, the Panjab Government tried to defend its stand on the plea that intervention in the religious affairs of a 'sensitive community' was undesirable. This attitude of the Panjab Government was further explained by Sir John Maynard in a note dated 15 January 1921[2] in which he stated that the question was one between the persons claiming and the persons having the possession. The Government, according to him, did not accept the 'responsibility of maintaining the status quo'.[3]

In the earlier stages of reform, the Government was anxious to avoid doing anything 'which might drive the Sikhs generally,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

who had as a body behaved most loyally during the war, into anything like opposition to the Government'.[4] Apart from the fear that the loyal Sikhs might be driven away, there were other factors at the national level which compelled the Government to adopt such an attitude. Important sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities in the Panjab had united in a strong opposition to the Government. The Khilafat question had alienated Muslim support from the Government and the Panjab had favourably responded to the non-violent non-cooperation call of Mahatma Gandhi.[5]

As for Sikh politics, the extremists who dominated the newly formed Central Sikh League, were in favour of a union with the Congress and Khilafat leaders over the issue of non-cooperation and passed a formal resolution pledging their support to the movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi.[6] At this juncture, the Panjab Government could ill-afford to alienate the moderate leadership of the Sikh community which had been its consistent supporter. Again, for similar reasons, the authorities did not make any attempt to restore the status quo disturbed by the reformers when they took possession of the Akal Takhat Bunga (Amritsar), Babe-di-Ber, Sialkot, Panja Sahib at Hasan Abdal, Sacha Sauda at Sheikhupura, Chola Sahib in Amritsar district and various other Gurdwaras.

It was only after the Akali Jathas' attempts to take possession of the Durbar Sahib, Tarn Taran, and consequent bloodshed there that a reassessment of the policy was undertaken by the Government. The Nankana tragedy was an eye-opener for the authorities at all levels. The failure of the local officials to take necessary measures to prevent the deplorable loss of life was a subject of censure in the Home-Political Department of the Government of India. Criticism of the Panjab officials by the Government of India and also the native press made the Panjab Government hypersensitive to the question and issues highlighted by the tragedy. The Government began to realise that it could no longer keep quiet and neutral in what it had so far believed to be a religious affair of a sensitive community. From this point onward a marked change is noticeable in the Panjab Government's policy towards the Akali Movement.

In the second phase, we notice a desire on the part of the Panjab Government to produce an immediate legislative measure to solve the outstanding disputes and to check the growing unrest among the Sikh masses in general and the Sikh soldiers in particular over

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the issue of Gurdwara reform. Realising that the enactment of a formal legislation on the issue would take a long time and the need for reform was urgent, the Government tried to meet the emergent situation by issuing an Ordinance in March 1921.[7] The Ordinance provided a three-man Judicial Commission which was to take charge of all cases of disputes in Gurdwara management. However, this measure failed to check the growing political unrest in the province. With a view to checking this unrest and to bring the situation back to normal, an effort was made in April 1921 to prepare a draft of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill in consultation with the leading members of the Sikh community. This measure was introduced in the Panjab Legislative Council on 5 April 1921, and was referred to a Select Committee.[8] However, when the Bill was again presented in the Council in September 1921, after its approval by the Select Committee, the Sikh Members of the Council did not support the measure. In the face of such a degree of opposition the Government could not proceed with the passage of the Bill and this much-advertised and widely discussed Bill was dropped finally on 10 November 1921.[9]

As the tempo of reform was building up and the Government saw no way out of the impasse, feelers continued to be put out among the Sikh Members of the Council to obtain some consensus before introducing a new Bill. This resulted in two more attempts at the Gurdwara Legislation.

During a year's interval between the lapse of the first Bill (November 1921) and the introduction of another (November 1922), the Government made further efforts to find a solution to the Sikh problem. The Panjab High Court, Lahore, instructed all Judicial Officers in the province to expedite pending cases of dispute over Gurdwara management.[10] Deputy Commissioners were also instructed to grant sanction in those cases wherein the party seeking reform wanted to institute proceedings to secure better management of the shrines.[11]

This change in the official attitude led to the moderates extending their cooperation to the Government to get their grievances redressed through legal means. The Mahants also adopted a more reasonable line of action on realising that the authorities could no longer help them retain their hereditary positions in the face of popular opposition. In more than 15 cases the Mahants agreed to the transfer of property in the name of the concerned Gurdwaras.[12]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

These, however, were measures of interim relief and did not provide any lasting and satisfactory solution to the gigantic problem of Gurdwara reform. The measures failed to convince the reformers that the Government wanted to help them achieve their objective. When the Government realised that promises of 'sympathetic consideration' and their policy of winning over the moderates by small concessions had failed to check the popular movement and that there were fears of the Sikh units also being affected, the Viceroy of India advised the authorities in the Panjab to take the boldest step of offering a permanent settlement of this religious question by means of a Gurdwara Bill. Accordingly the Panjab Government came forward with another Bill in November 1922.

The new Bill was formally moved in the Panjab Legislative Council on 7 November 1922 and a Select Committee was appointed to go through its various provisions and to report by 11 November 1922. The Bill, as it emerged from the Select Committee, was an improvement upon the first one introduced in April 1921 as far as the personnel of the proposed Board were concerned—one representing the party of reform, the other the party in possession, and the third a European officer. Under the new Bill the Board was to consist of 4 members.[13] The reform party was to be represented by 2 members and could thus claim an upper hand. But this did not satisfy the reformers. Considering the anti-imperialistic character that the movement had acquired during the struggle, there was no room for a European member on the Commission. The number of the members was, therefore, reduced from 4 to 3, the European officer was eliminated and the reformist party given effective control.[14] Another important improvement in the Bill was that the cost of the Commission, unlike that of the previous one, was to be met from the provincial revenue. The Bill also tried to satisfy the opposition of the non-Sikhs by allaying their fears that some of their shrines might come under Akali control. The proposed Judicial Commission was to take charge of all the disputed Gurdwaras pending final settlement of disputes.

However, improvements in the Bill in favour of the party of reform as also official anxiety to find a solution to the Sikh problem failed to impress the Akali leadership whose sight was fixed very high because of their triumphs in the 'Keys Affair' and later in their struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh. Coupled with the fact that the Indian National Congress and other nationalist forces were backing it.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the Akali leadership thought it better to continue the agitation hoping to win fresh victories against the authorities rather than to accept the Bill and put an end to a movement already growing from strength to strength. It was not surprising, therefore, that when the Bill was taken up for discussion in the Council, the Sikh Members opposed any move to legislate for the Gurdwaras. However, the Government got the measure through with the support of the Mohammadan and the official Members of the Council. Since the S.G.P.C. and the Sikh M.L.C.'s, who were to nominate a representative each on the Gurdwara Tribunal provided by this Bill, refused to lend their cooperation, this Bill soon became a dead letter.

As time passed, the authorities in the Panjab and the higher officials in Delhi realised the extent of the futility of passing a Bill against the united opposition of the Hindu and Sikh Members of the Council. The measure, instead of solving the immediate problems which the Government faced, created fresh problems and the Akali agitation continued unabated. While the Government was contemplating alternative measures to contain the Akali agitation, there came a temporary lull as a result of the settlement of the dispute at Guru-ka-Bagh. During the lull, the Government found the much-needed time to reconsider its earlier policy with regard to the Akali Movement. It also believed that 'the longer the lull continues, the more difficult it would be for the S.G.P.C. to resuscitate the excitement prevalent during Guru-ka-Bagh episode'.[15] But the events that soon followed upset the official calculations. With the Akali leadership taking up the issue of the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha to his throne, an agitating force much bigger than any in the past rose to break the temporary lull.[16]

Whether the restoration question was a religious issue or not, and whether the S.G.P.C. was competent to take up the matter are questions discussed in detail in the 'Nabha Affair'. The Akali involvement in the Nabha affair and consequent agitation diverted the main body of the Akali leadership from religion to politics. It was during their agitation at Nabha that the Akalis received increasing support from the Indian National Congress and other political organisations in the country. The agitation which was started for the restoration of the Maharaja became a much more complicated affair, when an Akhand Path arranged by the Akalis at Gurdwara Gangsar, Jaito (Nabha State), was allegedly interrupted by the State

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

officials.[17] Taking it as an 'unprecedented' instance of insult of their religion, the Akalis used it to give to their movement a new lease of life.

The firing at the Shahidi Jatha at Jaito on 21 February 1924 further complicated the situation and the place became a fresh arena for the conflict between the entire official hierarchy from Nabha to London on the one hand. and the Akali leadership and other nationalist forces in the country on the other. The Government, after having made two unsuccessful attempts to find a legislative solution to the Sikh problem. thought it better to suppress the growing movement of non-cooperation in a native State with the help of native chiefs. the Sikh loyalists. the native army personnel and other native agencies. But. when even after they had filled all the jails with Akali agitators. the movement was proceeding unabated with no end in sight. they had no recourse but to reopen negotiations with the Akali leadership. At the same time. the Akalis: though apparently unaffected, were approaching the limit of their resources and were facing financial and other difficulties: they responded willingly to the official offer to negotiate.

It was in this climate of hope and compromise that an attempt was made by the authorities to normalise the relations between the Government and the Sikhs. At a suggestion from Sir Malcolm Hailey (the Home Member of the Council). the Viceroy. Lord Reading. invited General Sir William Birdwood. Commander-in-Chief. Northern Command. to negotiate with the Akali leadership on the question of Gurdwara legislation and the restoration of friendship between the Government and the Sikhs.[18] With the help of Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Narain Singh. the General. entered into negotiations with the Panjab Government on the one hand and the Akali leaders in jail and at large on the other.

In the course of his meetings with different sections of the people concerned. Birdwood found that it was a difficult task to bring different parties to a common platform. While the moderate Sikh leaders like Bhai Jodh Singh. Raja Singh and Risaldar Ranjodh Singh followed a policy of compromise and were willing to shelve some of the Sikh demands till a final solution of the problem emerged. the extremists. who actually dominated the Akali leadership. gave only conditional support to the Birdwood Committee. Thus. the Akali leadership. though willing to drop the Nabha issue. insisted on the unconditional completion of 101 Akand Paths at Jaito and the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

unconditional release of all the Akali prisoners. The General argued that once the negotiations were successfully concluded the release of prisoners could be easily secured. As he could not give any definite assurance on the question of the release of all categories of prisoners and the unconditional holding of the Akhand Paths, and since the Akali leadership could not promise cooperation without prior acceptance of these demands, the negotiations ended in stalemate and the Birdwood Committee finally abandoned its efforts for a compromise on 2 June 1924.[19]

Writing 16 years later about the failure in his negotiations, Birdwood gave the following summary in his autobiography, *the Khaki and the Gown*:

> The more extremist Akalis obstructed progress with quite unreasonable demands. They tried to make it a condition that, in addition to those detained for simple Gurdwara offences, all Sikhs undergoing imprisonment or awaiting trial—even for murder or manslaughter resulting from the seizure of Gurdwaras should be released before they would cooperate. To this stipulation it was, of course, quite impossible to agree, and after a whole month's discussion I had reluctantly to inform the Viceroy that the appointment of my Committee appeared to have been premature.[20]

But a careful perusal of the private papers of Malcolm Hailey shows that the uncompromising attitude of the extremists in the Akali leadership was not the only factor responsible for the failure of the negotiations. That the authorities were equally obdurate in the matter of the release of the Akali prisoners is clear from the following extract from Edward Maclagan's letter to Malcolm Hailey: 'My feeling throughout has been that the longer the leaders are in jail, the more reasonable will the attitude of the Akalis become and that if the leaders now under trial received sentences of a deterrent character, we might find the Sikh population much more ready to put forward reasonable terms....'[21] Hailey, who supported Maclagan, replied: 'But I confess that it does not look to me as if the atmosphere will be ripe for such a settlement until we have hit the present leaders of the movement much harder than we have done so far; in fact until they feel themselves that the game is up.'[22]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

It seems that equally responsible for the failure of the negotiations was the stiff posture adopted by the Panjab Government, especially when Hailey succeeded as the Governor of the Panjab. Hailey, who had all along been closely watching the developments in the Panjab as Home Member of the Viceroy's Council, possessed an intimate knowledge of the Sikh mentality and had a policy of his own towards the Akali Movement. Maclagan had granted several concessions to the Akalis, such as the unconditional release of the Akali prisoners during the earlier agitations over the 'Keys Affair' and Guru-ka-Bagh, only to find that each concession was interpreted by the Akali leadership as weakness and surrender by authorities. Hailey, on the other hand, wanted a definite assurance of better behaviour and the creation of a suitable climate before he would agree to the release of prisoners or make any other concession. Before giving any assurance he wanted a formal declaration from the Akal Takhat or in some other equally formal manner that the Jathas were dissolved and would not be reorganised, that there was no further question at issue about Nabha and that religious funds were not to be used for political purposes with accounts being published of their actual use.[23]

While the Government tried to fix the blame for the failure of the negotiations on 'the uncompromising extremists', the Akali and the nationalist leadership accused the Panjab Government of having 'materially changed its policy during the course of the negotiations'.[24]

During the third phase—the period between the failure of the Birdwood negotiations in June 1924 and the passage of the final Bill in July 1925—the leadership and resources of the Akali Movement were under a severe strain as a result of the new policy of repression unleashed by Hailey. It was a well-planned and carefully executed policy of splitting the Akali leadership, separating the religious issues from the political ones, opening new fronts to divide the resources of the Akalis, alienating the Hindus and Muslims and also the moderate Sikhs from the Akali cause and organising anti-Akali associations to put forward counter-claims against the Akalis. On consulting a large number of now-available private and confidential letters exchanged between Hailey and the higher authorities in Delhi and London, we find that Hailey was not interested in negotiating with the Akali leadership till the whole Sikh attitude had been transformed and made more pliable. He

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

felt that there had been too much inclination in the Panjab to let the Sikhs dictate terms and real peace was not possible till the Government was able to dictate terms to the Sikhs.[25]

In one of his letters to the higher authorities in London, Hailey summarised his new policy in the following manner:

> I do not think that we can now gain any more by efforts at conciliation, for theirs is a peculiar mentality which will always take conciliation for weakness....[26]

For the purpose of strengthening the moderates against the extremists, Hailey encouraged the loyalist elements in the Sikh community to come out in open opposition to the Akali Movement. He instructed the district-level officials to organise Sudhar Committees in every district containing Sikhs. To coordinate the efforts of the various anti-Akali associations, he helped form a central body, the Provincial Sudhar Committee, at Amritsar. These Committees consisted of the landed gentry, retired military officers and other title-holding Sikhs.[27] Though ostensibly Hailey denied that the Sudhar Committees were officially sponsored bodies, in his private letters he made no secret of his support to these bodies. In one of his letters to the Viceroy, informing him of the 'good work being done by these associations', he wrote: 'I frankly confess that they owe their existence to our instigation, and continue it under our support....'[28] Hailey then tried further to weaken the Akali leadership by separating the religious issues from the political ones. He achieved this by opening fresh fronts for Akali agitation with the appointment of a Receiver for Nankana Sahib and with his refusal to renew the lease of the Guru-ka-Bagh land, thus challenging the Akali leadership to start fresh morchas on these two issues.[29] Hailey also persuaded the Viceroy not to negotiate directly with the nationalist leaders and Members of the Central Legislative Assembly on the question of the release of Akali prisoners or that of the legislation for the Sikh shrines.[30] Observing that the Akalis were showing signs of weakness and that those at large could not effectively organise the movement, Hailey made another clever move. He encouraged the officially sponsored Sudhar committees to unite in promoting a Gurdwara Bill and to deprive the Akalis and their supporters of the main objective in continuing the agitation.[31]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

At this critical juncture, national leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mohammed Ali Jinnah came to the rescue of the Akalis. Realizing that the new Governor was not prepared to negotiate with the Akali leadership or the nationalists and was cleverly encouraging anti-Akali associations to draft a Bill on lines quite unfavourable to them, Pandit Malaviya tried to take the wind out of Hailey's sails by drafting a Bill of his own in consultation with the Akali leadership and by asking the Sikh Members of the Panjab Legislative Council to move the Bill and the Hindu Members to support it.[32] In case the introduction of his Bill was not allowed in the Panjab Legislative Council, Malaviya had up his sleeve the alternative of introducing it in the Central Legislative Assembly on the ground that there were also Sikh shrines outside the Panjab, and hence there was need for an all-India legislation on the subject.[33] Malaviya hoped to get his Bill through with the support of the nationalist Members of the Assembly.

The moves of Malaviya and Jinnah seem to have compelled Hailey to change his earlier policy of allowing the movement to prolong itself indefinitely and not to compromise with the Akalis on the Gurdwara Bill issue. Thus, on the one hand, he tried to persuade the Viceroy and Members of his Council not to allow the nationalist leaders to negotiate on behalf of the Akali leadership, while on the other, he opened negotiations with the Sikh Members of the Panjab Legislative Council through H.W. Emerson and F.H. Puckle.[34] And with this starts the final phase.

It was under these circumstances that Sardar Tara Singh, a Sikh M.L.C. from Moga, was asked to introduce the Bill drafted by him, the detailed provisions of which had been discussed both with the Akali leaders in the Lahore Fort Jail and the Government officials in Lahore and Delhi, before its introduction in the Panjab Legislative Council on 7 May 1925. The new measure was referred to a Select Committee which submitted its report on 20 June 1925.[35] After long and detailed discussions on each and every clause, the measure was unanimously adopted by the Council on 7 July 1925.

The Bill became an Act (Act VIII of 1925) when on 28 July 1925, it obtained formal assent of the Governor-General of India.[36] The Act came into force on 1 November 1925, with a Gazette Notification from the Government of the Panjab.[37]

After the acceptance of the Bill by the Akali leadership, the newly elected members of the Central Gurdwara Board met in the

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Town Hall, Amritsar, on 4 September 1926 where 14 names were added to the list of its members. The fully constituted Board held its first meeting on 2 October 1926 when after electing the Interim Committee, it was unanimously decided to rename the new Board as the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.[38] In the meantime, the Panjab Government also withdrew its earlier ban on the S.G.P.C. and the Shiromani Akali Dal and shortly afterwards by another notification recognised the newly formed S.G.P.C.,[39] thereby putting an end to the long struggle in the province.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

8

Impact of the Movement and some Broad Conclusions

The religio-political struggle of the Akalis—directed against the priests, Mahants and other vested interests in the Sikh shrines and consequently against the British imperialism—was one of the most powerful movements of modern India. Of all the movements in the Panjab, the Akalis' was perhaps the most popular, the biggest and the strongest with a broad base and active mass participation. In a short span of five years, no less than 30,000 men and women went behind bars, 400 of them died for the cause and 2,000 were wounded.[1] In addition, a large number of them suffered dismissal from service, withdrawal of jagirs and pensions, the imposition of fines, forfeiture of property and various other forms of punishment.[2] The recruitment of Sikhs into the Army and other services under the British Government was suspended for some time.[3] A large number of Sikh soldiers were court-martialled for wearing kirpans and black turbans, and for expressing their sympathy with the Akali Movement.[4] The editors, printers and publishers of the Akali and pro-Akali papers were fined or imprisoned, their securities forfeited and their publications banned.[5] Villages which had shown a marked sympathy for the movement were especially punished and recruitment of their inhabitants to the Army and other services stopped.[6]

In return for such mass sufferings and sacrifices, the Akali Movement secured to the Sikhs, in the form of the Sikh Gurdwara

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

and Shrines Act.[7] an undisputed and exclusive control over their places of religion and other properties attached to them. The movement also secured to the Sikhs a system of Gurdwara elections conducted under the supervision of the Government to form managing bodies for their places of religious importance. The system of Gurdwara elections was, and continues to be, a unique feature because no other social or religious group anywhere in the world seems to exercise a similar privilege of directly electing the managing bodies of their religious places.[8]

The Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill gave the S.G.P.C. supreme control over 200[9] important and historical Gurdwaras with an income of over 20 lakhs of rupees a year in 1925 (and now nearly 200 million). This change brought about some improvements in so far as the income from the Gurdwaras could no longer be used for the personal pleasures of their hereditary custodians, but gave birth to some new unhealthy practices. Since the passage of the Bill in 1925 and the subsequent transfer of the control of most of the important Sikh shrines to the elected hands, charges of misuse of the trust funds and platform have often been levelled by rival groups. Introduction of the election system and anxiety of the rival political groups to capture power by all means seems to be weakening the very cause and purpose of the popular control of the Sikh shrines.

The Akali Movement, though itself a product of the general awakening and growing political consciousness in the country, seems to have greatly strengthened the forces of nationalism in the Panjab by rejecting the Mahants, the landed aristocracy and other pro-British and vested interests in the Sikh community who had been declared the 'natural leaders' of the Sikhs by the official machinery. The movement provided the Sikh community with a new type of middle class nationalist leadership, consisting of barristers, vakils, school and college teachers and retired military officers.[10] This new leadership, instead of playing into the hands of the British officials as the previous leadership of the Chief Khalsa Diwan had done, preferred to join the mainstream of nationalism in the country. It was not surprising, therefore, to find a majority of the Akali leaders turning from the original Akali programme of Gurdwara reform and linking it with the movement of non-cooperation launched by Mahatma Gandhi and the larger programme of the country's struggle for freedom. It was due to this new type of leadership

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

that the Akalis could secure active sympathy and support of the Indian National Congress and other nationalist forces in the country in their own struggle against British imperialism in the Panjab.

It was mainly due to the Akali-Congress association during the Akali Movement that the two leaders came closer to each other and that the Sikhs became inextricably involved in Congress activities. Actually, the two groups among the Sikhs—the Akali advocates of purely religious reform and others who looked upon Gurdwara reform only as a part of the larger programme of the country's freedom—remained united till 1939, initially under the leadership of Baba Kharak Singh and later that of Master Tara Singh.[11]

In the Akali Movement, the Congress found an opportunity to further its own programme of non-cooperation launched by Mahatma Gandhi and to strengthen its position in the Panjab. By winning over the Akali leadership, they were able to influence a larger section of the Sikh masses who had till then remained aloof from the Congress programme. As Maulana Muhamad Ali remarked in the course of his Presidential Address at the Cocanada Session of the Indian National Congress on 31 December 1923: 'A better opportunity for civil disobedience at least on a provincial scale never presented itself since the arrest of the Mahatma...'[12]

The Congress leadership was quick to avail itself of the opportunity despite the fact that neither the movement for religious reform nor the question of the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha was in keeping with the secular and democratic programme of the Congress. But since the Akali struggle in the Panjab happened to have coincided with the movement of non-cooperation, the Congress leadership thought that if the Akalis were able to demonstrate the efficacy of passive resistance, it would provide a great encouragement to the forces of nationalism in the country.[13]

To give moral support to the Akalis in their non-violent struggle against the Government, the Congress leadership passed formal resolutions supporting them in whatever they did and describing the official attack[14] on the S.G.P.C. and the Shromani Akali Dal as 'a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians and a blow aimed at all movements for freedom'.[15] Dr. Kitchlew, the convener of the Satyagraha Committee, emphasised that 'the Akali struggle was now a national struggle and defeat of the Akalis for want of help from the Congress would affect the national

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

assembly'.[16] Akalis were also eulogised as 'the only living wing of the national movement'[17] and 'the strongest community in India because of the triumph of Satyagraha of which they had given full proof'.[18]

Apart from passing formal resolutions lending moral support, the Congress leadership also rendered the Akalis solid practical help by sending Congress volunteers to assist in their publicity work.[19] An Akali Sahayik Bureau was set up at Amritsar to coordinate the Akali-Congress activities and to help the Akalis organise their propaganda machinery.[20] Almost all of the important national leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Muhamad Ali and Hakim Ajmal Khan personally visited Nankana, Amritsar, Guru-ka-Bagh and other places of Akali activity to obtain first-hand information about the events and to help the Akalis by giving advice and moral support. In the special session of the Congress held at Delhi in September 1923, a resolution was passed supporting the Akali agitation in the Sikh State of Nabha. It was also decided to send the Congress observers there to get first-hand information about political developments. Jawaharlal Nehru, A.T. Gidwani and K. Santhanam, who were sent there for this purpose, were arrested as soon as they entered the State territory and put behind bars for having entered the State without the prior permission of the British Administrator of Nabha. During their stay in the Nabha jail and their subsequent trials, the Congress observers not only gained first-hand knowledge about the Akali cause and the genuineness of their sufferings, but also got a chance to know about the high-handedness of the bureaucracy and the arbitrary nature of justice in the Sikh State of Nabha then put under the control of a British Administrator. In a long hand-written statement choked with emotion and highly appreciative of the Akalis, Nehru attacked the British Administrator of Nabha and the judicial machinery in the State for their 'unscrupulous and crooked ways'. Having gained first-hand impressions about the Akalis, Nehru became their great admirer and wished to prove 'worthy of their high tradition and fine courage'. The last paragraph of his original statement drafted in the Nabha jail on 23 November 1923, reads as follows:

> I was in jail when the Guru-ka-Bagh struggle was gallantly fought and won by the Sikhs. I marvelled at the courage and

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

> sacrifice of the Akalis and wished that I could be given an opportunity of showing my deep admiration of them by some form of service. That opportunity has now been given to me and I earnestly hope that I shall prove worthy of their high tradition and fine courage. *Sat Sri Akal.*[21]

In return for the help extended to the Akali Movement, the Congress leadership was able to establish a good deal of influence with the Akali leaders and through them the Congress programme was carried to the Sikh masses. It was mainly due to the nationalist influence upon the Akali leadership that the S.G.P.C. was able to adopt non-violent non-cooperation as a weapon with which to fight the powerful bureaucracy in the Panjab and to broaden the scope of their earlier programme of Gurdwara reform. A formal resolution in favour of 'non-cooperation and passive resistance' was passed by the S.G.P.C. on 11 May 1921. Resolutions were also passed at this meeting to boycott liquor and foreign goods and to substitute Panchayats for the courts of law.[22]

With the election of Sardar Kharak Singh,[23] a professed non-cooperator and a die-hard nationalist, as President of the newly elected S.G.P.C. in July 1921, and the formation of a new Executive Committee consisting of extremists and non-cooperators, the movement of non-cooperation in the Panjab was further strengthened. This new element in the Akali leadership, to whom the cause of religious reform differed little from extreme nationalism, was able to introduce national politics into the movement for Gurdwara reform and thereby broaden the scope of the Akali Movement.

Perusal of the court proceedings against some of the prominent Akali leaders shows that the ideology of non-cooperation had taken deep roots among them. Most of them did not defend themselves in the courts. During interrogation, they neither admitted nor denied the official charges against them. Whatever they said in the court was not by way of defence but to tell the official machinery that as non-cooperators they had no regard for the British judicial system which they considered arbitrary and biased. The following extract from Baba Kharak Singh's speech in the court serves as an example: 'As the Government is a party to this prosecution and the Judge is one of its servants, I, therefore, do not wish to make any statement. My position as President of the Sikh Panth is like that of the Presidents of the United States, France and Germany.'[24]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

A strong link and reciprocal relationship had thus been established between the two movements. The Akali Movement became a part of the national movement—in effect an extension of the Congress programme of non-cooperation at the provincial level—and in return received active sympathy and support from the Congress leadership in its struggle against the Government.

The Akali Movement also clearly demonstrated the efficacy of the doctrine of non-violent non-cooperation when by peaceful means the Akalis in the Panjab were able to dislodge the Mahants from their hereditary positions in the Sikh shrines, and the Government from its unreasonable stand. The *Akali-te Pardesi* summarised in the following manner the Akali contribution towards the strengthening of the forces of nationalism:

> The Akalis have shown to the Indians how a most arrogant, oppressive, cunning and deceitful bureaucracy can be brought to its knees by means of non-violent Satyagraha. By sacrifices at Guru-ka-Bagh, they have destroyed the prestige of the bureaucracy and raised the dignity of India.[25]

The Akali Movement provides one more illustration of the British policy of weakening popular movements by creating dissent among the leadership and among the masses supporting it. When Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Panjab, realised that he could not suppress a popular movement like that of the Akalis by the earlier policy of repression and when each successive measure taken to suppress the Akalis had further added to the popularity and success of the movement, he tried to defeat the Akalis by splitting the ranks of their leadership, isolating the extremists from the moderates, separating the religious movement from the political issues, alienating the Hindus and the Muslims from the Sikhs and by organising anti-Akali associations to challenge the Akali leadership's exclusive hold over the religious and political affairs of the Sikhs.[26]

The split in the Akali ranks continued to widen resulting in the formation of various rival groups working against each other. The first major split took place immediately on the passage and acceptance of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill in July 1925. While the moderates like Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh, Giani Sher Singh and others came out of jail after securing conditional release

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

and captured power in the S.G.P.C., the extremists like Sardar Teja Singh Samundri, Master Tara Singh, Bhag Singh Vakil, Gurcharan Singh Vakil, Sohan Singh Josh and others remained behind the bars. However, the success of the moderates was only a short-lived one, for soon after their unconditional release, the extremists launched strong propaganda against the moderate group which had lowered the prestige of the Akalis by accepting conditional release. During the elections to the new S.G.P.C. under the provisions of the newly passed Bill, the extremists made a clean sweep over the moderates and other pro-British elements in the Akali leadership. Further polarisation took place among the extremists. While Master Tara Singh and his lieutenants captured power in the Akali politics and the S.G.P.C., staunch nationalists like Baba Kharak Singh, rising above the factional Akali politics and scramble for power, joined the mainstream of Indian nationalism as they believed that a still bigger Gurdwara, i.e., the Indian sub-continent, was yet to be liberated. Further, the progressives in the Akali ranks, who seem to have imbibed a Marxist bias during their early contacts with the Ghadrites, the Babbar Akalis and revolutionary elements in the country and abroad, started turning towards left-wing extremist groups in the country and ultimately joined the ranks of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the Kirti Kissan Party, both of which had a strong Marxist bias.[27]

Perusal of the data available on the Akali Movement and personal interviews with some of the Jathedars shows that while the leadership of the Akali Movement was provided by middle-class Sikh nationalists, consisting of barristers, school and college teachers, retired military officers and middle-class landholders, the rank and file of Akali volunteers came from the Sikh peasantry. On the basis of available figures, it will be no exaggeration to say that the Sikh peasantry formed the backbone of the Akali Movement. That the movement was able to achieve a large measure of success was mainly due to this class of people involving itself wholeheartedly in the Akali struggle. Out of the total number of Akali volunteers from different areas, roughly 66 per cent belonged to the Jat Sikh peasantry, the majority of them hailing from the districts of Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Amritsar, Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. Similarly, in the case of the Akali Movement in the Sikh States the majority of participants again belonged to the peasantry.

The growing discontentment of the Sikh peasantry, which found its first organised expression in the form of the Agrarian Unrest

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

of 1907, was fully exploited by the Ghadrite propaganda in making the rural classes aware of their exploitation at the hands of a foreign Government. Ghadrite activities also created a spirit of rebellion against the British authorities which continued to ferment and found expression in the form of the Akali struggle and later the terrorist activities of the Babbar militants. The demobilisation of the Sikh soldiers at the end of the First World War and the unsatisfactory treatment that had been meted out to them during the War led to great discontentment. Both during the War and on their return to India they heard from their fellow villagers and relatives of the internment of nearly 5,000 of their folk for alleged sympathy with the Ghadrites and of the enforcement of the Indent System (under which every village was compelled to provide a certain number of recruits) and of the pressure to raise funds for the War. Several other factors contributed to the increasing political unrest: the summer monsoon failed; the Rabi harvest was extremely poor and the cost of living rose higher than ever before. Propaganda of the Sikh preachers that 'never had the Sikh nation fallen so low or was in so wretched a plight as during the British rule', also made the Sikh people unhappy with the British Government which was responsible for the annexation of their Kingdom and consequent backwardness, disease and poverty. Having thus been made conscious of the miseries of foreign rule, it was not surprising to find the Sikh peasantry responding favourably to the Akali preachers' argument that 'the bureaucracy was bent upon destroying the Sikh religion.'

The Akali Movement shattered many popular myths about the Sikhs—the most important one being their supposedly 'unfailing loyalty to the British Raj'. The British Government, soon after the annexation of the Panjab in 1849, had not disturbed the vested interests in the Sikh shrines and other landed aristocracy but confirmed most of them in their existing jagirs. The Government had also won over the limited Sikh elite with Government jobs, jagirs and titles. It was through these vested interests that the Government made strenuous efforts to propagate among the Sikh masses an ideology of friendship with and loyalty to the British Raj. Thus the myth of the Sikhs' unfailing loyalty to the British Empire was built. These 'natural leaders' went even to the extent of declaring that the British were ordained by the Sikh Gurus to rule over India and it was, therefore, the duty of every Sikh

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

to be loyal and faithful to them. Officially inspired literature enumerating the blessings of the British rule was largely and freely distributed among the Sikhs in general and the Sikh soldiers in particular.

After thus cultivating a 'sense of loyalty' among the articulate Sikhs, the British Government made efforts to isolate them from other communities and then to create divisions in their ranks. The British officials, both in their casual talks as well as in written accounts, pictured the Sikhs as a 'martial race' and argued that they were 'a separate nation', distinct from the Hindus and the Muslims. After isolating them from other communities, further divisions were created in their ranks by creating martial and non-martial, agriculturist and non-agriculturist and rural and urban classes among them. Any attempt at unification was viewed with suspicion. Thus, when the 'neo-Sikhs' in the Singh Sabha, a movement which had very largely received official patronage, tried to advocate abolition of class distinctions and advocated inter-marriage and inter-dining among the so-called high and low classes of Sikhs, their activities were noted in official circles as 'dangerous' in so far as they tended to 'consolidate the nation and to enable it to present a solid front'.[28]

It was through the vested interests in the Sikh community that the Government made efforts to keep the Sikhs—particularly those in the Army—away from the influence of the growing political consciousness in the country and other 'unhealthy influences' in general. The priests, Mahants and Government-appointed managers of the Sikh shrines and other landed aristocracy were very largely used by the Government to condemn the nationalist forces in the country and to honour and eulogise the British officials who suppressed the popular aspirations of the people. It was not very surprising therefore to find the priests of the Sikh temples issuing *Hukamnamas* against the Ghadrite heroes, calling them 'renegades' and later honouring General Dyer with a saropa and declaring him a 'Sikh'.

It was on the basis of the generalisation of the 'loyalty' and 'acts of friendship' of the Government-nominated managers of the Sikh shrines, the landed aristocracy and the Sikh princes who together formed less than 0.01 per cent of the total Sikh population in 1922 (and in any case, had no real influence with the Sikh community, as was demonstrated during the Akali Movement) that the British Government claimed the 'loyalty' and 'friendship' of the whole Sikh community.[29]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Thus the myth of the 'proverbial loyalty' of the Sikhs, which the British officials had so sedulously propagated, was shattered when during the Akali Movement, the so-called martial and non-martial, agriculturist and non-agriculturist, urban and rural, Jat and non-Jat, the elite and the hoi polloi, all united on one platform for the liberation of their places of worship from the control of the Mahants and of their country from British imperialism.

The Akali Movement also shattered the myth of the 'proverbial loyalty of the Sikh soldiers' to the British Raj. Perusal of 'Notes on Trouble in the Indian Units'[30] shows that in spite of official censorship and other measures to check the Sikh soldiers from being affected by the Akali Movement, Akali propaganda penetrated the ranks of the Indian Army and heavily diluted the loyalty of the Sikh soldiers in its various units. For instance, the Sikh soldiers in the 13-16th Cavalry, the 14th Sikhs and the 19th Panjabees at Jullundur and the 9th Bhopal at Ambala expressed their sympathy with the Akali Movement by wearing the prohibited Kirpans and black turbans and by refusing to salute in the regulation manner. 17 men of the 9th Bhopal refused to sail for duty overseas and a whole company of the 19th Panjabees went on hunger strike in sympathy with a Sikh sepoy who had been arrested for wearing a black turban. These soldiers were court-martialled and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment each. Similarly, Sikh soldiers of the 28th Battalion at Dera Usman, the 20th Panjabees at Loralai, the 30th Sikhs at Idak, the 27th Sikhs at Quetta, the 57th Rifles at Piaza Raghza, the 45th Sikhs at Cananore, and the Mechanical Transport Company at Bombay were court-martialled, sentenced and dismissed from service for their sympathy with the Akali Movement. Apart from these measures against Sikh soldiers in the Indian Army, retired Sikh soldiers and military pensioners, who had joined the Akali Jathas at the Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito were also penalised for their 'disloyalty' by having their pensions and jagirs withdrawn.[31] A temporary ban was imposed on the recruitment of Sikhs into the Indian Army during the Akali Movement. As a result, the proportion of the Sikh soldiers in the army came down from 20 to 13 per cent.[32]

During their five years of peaceful struggle the Akalis shattered yet another myth that 'the Sikh is by nature violent'.[33] The sufferings borne by the Akali reformers at Tarn Taran, Panja Sahib, Nankana, Guru-ka-Bagh, Jaito and other places with calm and cool courage

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

in the face of the gravest provocation disproved all official misconceptions about their character. Though the Government tried to create some misunderstandings about the Akalis and levelled vague charges of 'violent activities' against them, all those who had seen them during their trials and tribulations at Guru-ka-Bagh and other places were convinced of their sincere adherence to their vow of non-violence. C.F. Andrews, a Christian Missionary, and an eyewitness to the beatings being administered to the Akalis, described the official action as 'inhuman, brutal, foul, cowardly and incredible to an Englishman and a moral defeat of England'. Later, he told Sir Edward Maclagan, the Governor of the Panjab, that 'he had seen hundreds of Christs being crucified at Guru-ka-Bagh', and asked the Government to stop the merciless beating of the peaceful Akalis. The following extract from his eyewitness account of the Guru-ka-Bagh incident testifies to the Akalis' strict adherence to the vow of non-violence:

> Up till now I had not seen the suffering itself except as it was reflected in the faces of the spectators. But when I passed beyond a projecting wall and stood face to face with the ultimate moral contest I could understand the strained looks and the lips that silently prayed. It was a sight which I never wish to see again, a sight incredible to an Englishman. *There were four Akali Sikhs with black turbans facing a band of about a dozen policemen,* including two English officers. They had walked slowly up to the line of the police just before I had arrived and they were standing silently in front of them at about a yard's distance. They were perfectly still and did not move further forward. Their hands were placed together in prayer and it was clear that they were praying. *Then, without the slightest provocation on their part, an Englishman lunged forward the head of his lathi which was bound with brass. He lunged it forward in such a way that his fist which held the staff struck the Akali Sikh, who was praying, just at the collar bone with great force. It looked the most cowardly blow as I saw it struck and I had the greatest difficulty in keeping myself under control...* The blow which I saw was sufficient to fell the Akali Sikh and send him to the ground. He rolled over, and slowly got up once more, and faced the same punishment again. Time after time one of the four who had gone forward was laid prostrate by repeated blows, now from the English officer and now from the police who were under his control...[34]

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Another eyewitness, Capt. A.L. Verges, an American cinematographer, described the peaceful Akali sufferings at Guru-ka-Bagh as 'a unique struggle in human history' and 'a peaceful rebellion against the constituted authority'.[35] Similar eyewitness accounts about the police excesses and the non-violent sufferings of the Akalis were issued by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, K. Santhanam, A.T. Gidwani and other nationalist leaders, press representatives, both Indian and foreign, and Members of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Panjab Legislative Council.[36]

Akali victories in the early phases of the struggle over the 'Keys Affair' and at Guru-ka-Bagh and other places, the support of the Sikh peasantry, military pensioners and other important elements in the Sikh community such as teachers and students, coupled with the fact of consistent support in the native press and from the nationalist leadership, seem to have greatly increased the power and prestige of the S.G.P.C. and made the Akali leadership confident of its capacity to fight the powerful bureaucracy. After rejecting the official offer of restoration of friendship, the Akali leadership decided to broaden the scope of its earlier programme of Gurdwara reform and to continue their struggle till their objective of securing statutory recognition of their exclusive control over the places of Sikh religion was achieved.

At the same time, the Government miscalculated the strength of the Akali leadership and the extent of their hold over the Sikh masses on the question of Gurdwara reform. Instead of meeting their reasonable demands, it tried to isolate them from the nationalist forces and then suppress their movement with an iron hand. It was mainly because each party underestimating the other's strength and overestimated its own, that the struggle was prolonged. Actually most of the important Gurdwaras including Tarn Taran, the Golden Temple, the Akal Takhat, Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib and even the prestigious Guru-ka-Bagh had already come under the Akali control by November 1922. From a purely religious point of view, there was not much of an issue left except the enactment of suitable legislation to give statutory recognition to the *de facto* Akali control over these places. As far as the Government was concerned, there was not much justification for continuing its policy of repression when most of the really important Gurdwaras had passed into the hands of the Akalis. It was mainly due to considerations of political

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

prestige that the Akali struggle was allowed to continue and the Akali leadership took up a fresh issue, i.e., the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha, in spite of objections from some of its members that it was a 'political issue'.

Regarding the restoration of the Maharaja of Nabha, on the face of it, the Akalis failed because they could neither restore the Maharaja to his throne nor continue their agitation for this purpose after the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill in July 1925. But the failure of the Akalis to have the Maharaja restored should not be taken to mean that their movement in the States left no impact. More important than the immediate goal, which the Akalis could not achieve, was the higher goal—the emancipation of the people of the Sikh States from the doubly oppressive and autocratic rule of the princes. The Akali struggle there, which had no political organisation, became one of the major factors leading to political awakening in these islands of despotic tyranny. It was during the Akali struggle in the Sikh States that their subjects came out in support of the Akali Movement in spite of strong opposition and threats held out by their rulers. Once the people had revolted against their rulers on religious issues, it was not difficult for them to raise their voice against the arbitrary ways in social, economic and political matters. Thus, while the Akali Movement in the Panjab ended in 1925, the progressive wing of the Akali Dal continued the struggle in the Sikh States thereafter and began to intervene in the internal affairs of the Princely States of the Panjab—Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala, Faridkot and Kalsi. The arrest of popular leaders further strengthened the movement in the Sikh States and ultimately led to the establishment of a purely political organisation under the name of the Panjab Riyasti Praja Mandal in August, 1925.[37]

However, the most important contribution of the Akali Movement was that it brought about political awakening among the Sikh masses, particularly the Sikh peasantry. Prior to the Akali Movement, the majority of the Sikh masses, with the exception of the educated politically conscious urban middle-class, had remained oblivious of the growing political consciousness in the country. It was only during the Akali Movement that the pro-British feudal leadership of the Sikhs was replaced by educated middle-class nationalists and the rural and urban classes united on a common platform during the two-pronged Akali struggle. Akali propaganda that all

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

evils—religious, social, economic and political—were the result of foreign rule and that reform in the Gurdwaras and their liberation from the hereditary priests was not possible without the political liberation of the country became a vital factor in the politicalization of the Sikhs. It was this idea of liberation of the country from a foreign Government that united all sections of the Sikh community and brought the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs of the province on one platform.

The Akali Movement also gave birth to the Shromani Akali Dal and the religion-based politics of the Akalis. The Shromani Akali Dal founded in December 1920 to manage the necessary resources in terms of men and money to run the Akali struggle, acquired a unique position of power and prestige in the religious and political life of the Sikhs. Because of the Akalis' sacrifices in and contribution to the success of the Akali Movement, the Akali Dal gained tremendous influence with the Sikh masses, particularly in the rural areas. In spite of internal differences among the Akali leaders and the official patronage bestowed upon the moderate elements in opposition to the Dal, the latter acquired unfettered hold over the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Sikh religious and political affairs. The S.G.P.C., since its inception in October 1920, has continued to be under the exclusive control of the Akali Dal which has invariably gained a large majority in all the Gurdwara elections held from time to time. With its continued hold over the S.G.P.C. along with vast resources in terms of men and money, the Shromani Akali Dal has been wielding tremendous political influence and power among the Sikh masses since the days of the Akali Movement.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Notes

Chapter 1

1. The word Gurdwara is a compound of the two Panjabi words, Guru and Dwara, literally meaning the Guru's gate. The word *Dharamsal*, literally means a free lodge. In the present context it means a place of religion where, apart from being given free board and lodging, the followers go to earn religious merit. Kahan Singh, *Mahankosh*, p.496.

2. *Sangat* means congregation of followers. *Pangat*, literally meaning one row or line, required followers to sit in one line while partaking in the free-kitchen, *Mahankosh* p, 179: Fauja Singh, 'Development of Sikhism under the Gurus' *Sikhism* (Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebration Series), Punjabi University, Patiala, p.6.

3. From the *Puratan Janamsakhi* we learn that the first *Dharamsal* was erected at Tulamba (near Multan in Pakistan) and Sajjan was put in charge of it to propagate Sikh faith in that area, *Puratan Janamsakhi* (Bhai Vir Singh [Ed.], 5th Edition), p.74.

4. Ganda Singh, 'Guru Nanak's Impact on History' in *Guru Nanak* published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p.90.

5. The word Sikh is derived from the Sanskrit *Shishya*, meaning disciple or a devoted follower. *Mahankosh* defines Sikh as a follower of Guru Nanak who has accepted his faith and who recognises the *Guru Granth Sahib* as his religious book (p.144). Thus, those who followed Guru Nanak's religion came to be known as his Sikhs or disciples.

6. *Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri XXXVIII*, lines 1,6,7,8.

7. Till recently the above work was attributed to Mohsin Fani. The book is now attributed to Zulfikar Ardistani also called Mubid. See Ganda Singh, 'Nanak Panthis' in the *Panjab Past and Present*, Vol.1, Part 1, p.47.

8. *Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis* (English translation by Ganda Singh of the portions of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* relating to the Sikhs) published in the Guru Nanak Number of the *Panjab Past and Present*, September 1969, p.51.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

9. In the present context *Manji* means centre for the propagation of the Sikh faith, *Mahankosh,* p.750; Fauja Singh, op.cit., p.8.

10. Masand, corrupted form of the Persian *Masnad,* means agent or deputy in the present context.

11. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *Short History of the Sikhs.* p.27.

12. *Varan Bhai Gurdas,* XIII (19).

13. For a detailed account, see Giani Gian Singh's *Sri Guru Panth Parkash,* pp.160-1; *Short History of the Sikhs,* p.52.

14. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion,* Vol. IV, pp.316-7.

15. Kesar Singh Chhibar, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das,* p.132.

16. *Ibid,* verses 351-4; Macauliffe, op.cit., Vols. V,VI, p.86, n.18, p.248-9.

17. 'O, Mardana, take not the food given as an offering as, like poison, it is indigestible', *Gurmat Martand,* Vol. II, p.687.

18. Quoted in Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening,* p.16.

19. For a detailed account, see Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *Short History of the Sikhs,* pp.109-10.

20. The word *Udasi* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Udas* meaning grief, dejection. The sect owes its origin to Baba Sri Chand, eldest son of Guru Nanak, who adopted a peculiar type of dress and formed a new class of Sikh preachers, *Mahankosh,* p.7. See for details Ishar Singh, *Itihas Baba Siri Chand ate Udasin Sampardai;* 'Sources on the life of Guru Nanak' special number of the *Panjab Past and Present,* pp.116-9, 190-1 and 211-23. *Gurmat Martand,* Vol. 1,p.6.

21. John Campbell Oman, 'The Order of the Udasis' in the *Panjab Past and Present,* September 1969, pp.190-1.

22. Mahant means head of a Dera, Akhara or a sect or the chief Sadhu, *Mahankosh,* p.700.

23. John Campbell Oman, op.cit., p.191.

24. In the Sikh social and moral codes, called *Rehatnamas,* it is laid down that the income from the Gurdwaras is meant for works of public welfare. Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh warned the priests against using the trust income to meet their personal needs. *Mahankosh,* pp.312, 496 and 698.

25. Baba Dayal was born in Vaisakh 1840 BK (circa April 1738) at Peshawar. For a detailed account see Dr. Man Singh Nirankari's article in the *Panjab Past and Present,* April 1973, pp.1-11 and Dr.Ganda Singh, 'Nirankari Sampardai' in the *Panjab,* Vol.II, p.90.

26. Ganda Singh, op. cit.

27. Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement,* p.15.

28. Dr.Ganda Singh traces the origin of the movement to Bhagat Jawahar Mal and mentions Baba Balak Singh as one of his prominent disciples. According to him it was Baba Balak Singh who popularised the new movement. Baba Ram Singh, who is accepted as 'Guru' by the Kukas, was one of the three important followers of Baba Balak Singh ('Kuka Lehar' in the *Panjab,* Vol. II, pp.96-9). Dr.Fauja Singh and Dr.M.M.Ahluwalia accept Baba Ram Singh

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

as the founder of the movement. There is yet another point of difference between Dr.Ganda Singh and Dr.Fauja Singh. While the former believes that the Kukas' was a 'purely religious movement', the latter credits the movement with 'political goals'. Marking the difference between the Kuka and the other socio-religious movements Dr. Fauja Singh writes : 'Whereas the other movements devoted themselves entirely to social and reform activities with the main emphasis on re-examination of the prevailing thought and practices... the Kuka movement concentrated on these reforms primarily with the object of preparing the ground for the attainment of a political goal'. Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement,* pp.1-2. However. Dr.Ganda Singh does not agree with this thesis and believes that this 'purely religious movement' was described by the English officers who had been terrorised by the rising of 1857, as 'political' and 'revolutionary' and explains the Kukas' boycott of courts, railways, post-offices and their use of Swadeshi as making virtue of necessity. ('Kuka Lehar' in the *Panjab,* Vol.II of *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth,* pp.103-12).

29. Baba Ram Singh was born in village Bhaini (District Ludhiana) on 3 February 1816. See for details Ganda Singh, 'Kuka Lehar' in the *Panjab.* Vol.II, pp.96-9 and Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement.*

30. Fauja Singh, *the Kuka Movement.* p.24.

31. Ibid., p.29.

32. In the Parliamentary Papers relating to the Kuka sect the following account is given about Baba Ram Singh's activities: '....He abolishes all distinctions of caste among Sikhs; advocates indiscriminate marriages of all classes; enjoins the marriage of widows, all of which he performs himself; he never takes alms himself and prohibits his followers from doing so, enjoins abstinence from liquors and drugs.. he exhorts his disciples to be cleanly and truth-telling and it is well that every man carries his staff; and they all do. The *Granth* is their only accepted inspired volume. The brotherhood may be known by the tie of their turban - *sheeda pug* - by a watch-word, by necklace of knots made in a white woolen cord, to repeat beads and which are worn by all the community'. Home-Judicial Proceedings, 273-84, August 1872, quoted in Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement.* p.20

33. Ganda Singh 'Kuka Lehar', in the *Panjab.* Vol.II. n.28, pp.96-7.

34. Ibid.

35. Following verses which became current in those days explain the people's hatred for the British Rule in India: *London se Melechh char aae: Inhan ne ghar ghar buchar khane pae: Guran de inhan ghat Karae: Sanu hun sir dene aae.*

(The unclean have come from London, and have established slaughter houses in every place; they have killed our Gurus. And we must now sacrifice ourselves). K.S.Talwar. 'Early Phases of the Sikh Renaissance and Struggle for Freedom' in the *Panjab Past and Present,* October 1970, pp.291-2.

36. See for details the Singh Sabha number of the *Panjab Past and Present,* April 1973; G.S.Dhillon's Ph.D. dissertation, 'Character and impact of the Singh Sabha Movement', Punjabi University. Patiala.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

37. D.Petrie, *Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Some Recent Developments in Sikh Politics*, para 18, republished in the *Panjab Past and Present*, October 1970, pp,301-79.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. During his visit to the Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1907, the students of the college not only gave him a warm and enthusiastic reception but became so excited that they unyoked the horses of his carriage and drove the carriage themselves from the railway station to the college. *Secret Memorandum*, para 13. Later Mahatma Gandhi, while addressing the students of the Khalsa College in October 1920, exhorted them to boycott the English, stop receiving their grants and become true Khalsas. *Collected Works*, Vol.XVIII, p.311.

45. *Secret Memorandum*, para 19.

46. The book was proscribed by the authorities in the Panjab. A copy of this is available in the list of material sent to the Secretary of State for India and now preserved in the Prescribed Indian Books at the British Museum (Oriental Collection), London, where I consulted it.

47. Ibid.

48. After the defeat of the forces of the Lahore Durbar in the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46), the great sons of the Panjab like Bhai Mahraj Singh, Diwan Mul Raj, Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala and Bedi Bikram Singh of Una, organised a powerful anti-British movement in the Panjab and with the assistance of Rajput chiefs of the hills tried to recover their lost dominion. This resulted in the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49). Even after their defeat and the subsequent annexation of the Panjab on 29 May 1849, these brave men did not lose courage and continued their struggle against the British authorities in one form or the other. They were successful in reclaiming Maharaja Duleep Singh, who had earlier been converted to Christianity when he was a minor, to the fold of Sikhism. They encouraged him to declare war against the British rulers in India with the help of the Czar of Russia. The Maharaja left England and went to Russia to meet the Czar but nothing came out of this visit and he had to return to Paris where he died on 22 October 1893. For details see Ganda Singh (Ed.), *Correspondence Relating to Maharaja Duleep Singh*. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976.

49. In spite of the fertile soil, irrigation facilities and hard work, the economic condition of the majority of the peasants in the Panjab was far from satisfactory. Apart from natural causes, such as uncertain rainfall and heavy mortality of the livestock, the fragmentation of the land and growing rural indebtedness made the Panjab peasantry very unhappy. The passage of the Alienation of Land Act in 1900 A.D. did not really help the small farmer as it only provided against the expropriation of the small peasant by the rich landlords. The agriculturist money-lender, who replaced the village *Bania*, fleeced the small peasants in a manner as unscrupulous as that of the previous money-lender.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Therefore, any little increase in the revenue was bound to hit the small peasant hard who was generally living in perpetual debt.

50. O'Donnel, *Causes of the Present Unrest in India*, p.94. For instance the land revenue from Panjab which earlier amounted to Rs.1,500,000 in 1891, went up to 1,925,000 in 1906.

51. *Panjabi*, May-June 1907; *Jhang Sayal*, *The Tribune*, *Khalsa Samachar*, May 1907, quoted in Sri Ram Sharma's *The Panjab in Ferment*. pp.14-15, *Jhang Sayal*, Appendix VIII, p.74 of the above work.

52. For a detailed account of the official measures against the agitators see N.Gerald Barrier, 'The Panjab Disturbances of 1907' in the *Modern Asian Studies*. No.1, Vol.IV, 1967, pp.353-83.

53. Lady Minto, *India: Minto and Morley*, pp.130-1.

54. The association was organised in the summer of 1913. In the initial stages it merely looked after and protected the rights of the Indian emigrants in Canada and U.S.A. But later, as a result of various causes of disaffection against British imperialism, the party broadened its base by including the freedom of India in its sphere of activities. The very first issue of the *Ghadr-di-Gunj* (The Echo of Rebellion) stated the objectives of the Ghadr Party in the following manner:

   "Today, there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's language, a war against the British Raj... What is our name? Ghadr. What is our work? Ghadr. Where will Ghadr break out? In India. The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink," *Ghadr*, November 1913, quoted in Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, p.177. For details see Sohan Singh Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna;* Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadr : 1914-15;* G.S.Deol, *Ghadr Party and the Indian National Movement;* Gurcharan Singh Sahansra, *Ghadr Lehar* and A.C. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad*, 1905-1922.

55. According to official reports, the Ghadrites were able to secure an encouraging response from the men of the 23rd Cavalry at Lahore, 26th Panjabis at Ferozepur, 12th Cavalry and 28th Pioneers at Meerut. Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy*, 1913-15: Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It*, p.197.

56. The Chief Khalsa Diwan and pro-British managers of the important Sikh Shrines reiterated their loyalty to the British Empire by having *Hukamnamas* issued from the Akal Takhat in which the Ghadrite heroes were described as 'renegades' and the Sikhs were exhorted not to help them in their programme. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, p.183.

57. Ibid., see Note 56.

58. In order to legitimise the extraordinary powers assumed by the Government to check the revolutionary activities during the War, two new Bills were introduced on the recommendations of Sir Sidney Rowlatt. Ibid., p.162.

59. *Disorders Enquiry Committee Report*, p.29, gives the number of the killed as four.

60. Ibid.,pp.37-9.

61. *The Tribune*, 14 October 1919.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

62. Quoted in Michael O'Dwyer, op.cit.,p.284.

63. While the official version puts the figures of 200 dead the Congress Sewa Samiti is said to have given the figure at 500 based on actual tracing of corpses. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.XVII,p.174.

64. Colvin, *Life of General Dyer*, p.201. Confirmed by *The Tribune* (article on 'Gurdwara Reform') 9 May 1925. The *Akali*, 17 December 1921.

65. Colvin, op.cit.,p.201. This dialogue is also quoted in Sohan Singh Josh, a contemporary and participant in the Akali Movement, in his book, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, pp.15-6. In return for the honour he did to the General, Arur Singh was later honoured with K.C.I.E. (*Akali*, 3 January 1921).

66. Colvin, op.cit.,p.201. *The Civil and Military Gazette* also confirms 'the Sikh Symbols having been presented to the General', (25 January 1920 issue at the British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London). The incident is also confirmed by a number of contemporaries. In my personal interviews while Bhai Jodh Singh professed ignorance of this important incident Jathedar Pritam Singh, Giani Mahan Singh and Sardar Sohan Singh Josh. have confirmed this.

Chapter 2

1. Quoted in Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p.92.

2. Ibid., p.93.

3. Ibid., p.92.

4. Files containing copies of the 'Resolutions of the Chief Khalsa Diwan', Amritsar.

5. Memorials of the Khalsa Diwan began with a recitation of the 'glorious actions of friendship of the Government and favours done to the Sikh community' and ended with 'humble prayers for more concessions'.

6. Gurdwara Rakabganj, Delhi, marks the place where the beheaded body of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, was cremated. In 1913, its boundary wall was demolished to provide a straight road to the Viceregal lodge. Harchand Singh and S.S.Caveeshar organised a Shahidi Jatha and the wall was repaired. See for details, *The Panjab*, pp.12-13; and Sangat Singh. *Freedom Movement in Delhi*, pp.198-219.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. According to a modern critic, 'For the Chief Khalsa Diwan the highest nation was the Sikhs but higher still was the British Government'. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, p.17.

11. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.93.

12. For instance, Mahant Narain Das of Nankana's income was between four and five lakhs, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XIX, pp.20-1

13. For instance, when in 1895 a Jatha of the Sikhs from Lahore approached the Mahants of Nankana, they agreed to serve under a representative Committee of Management and signed a formal agreement for the purpose in the presence

of the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore. Not soon after the signing of the document, they changed their minds and the agreement became a dead letter. Mahants of other Gurdwaras also adopted a similar policy. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp.87-88.

14. The Charitable and Religious Trusts Act (Act XIV of 1920) quoted in Mukherjee's *Hindu Law of Religious and Charitable Trusts.*

15. Cases of Gurdwara Babe-di-Ber, Sialkot and Panja Sahib could not be pursued for want of the court fee of Rs.50,000 in the case of former and Rs.5,000 in the case of the latter. Partap Singh, *Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar*, p.85.

16. Tacit official support to the vested interests is borne out from the letter which C.M. King wrote to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi saying, *inter alia*, that' ... any person who attempts to eject forcibly any Mahant ... is liable to punishment under the law...' Letter in File No.179-11/1922, Appendix I.

17. Cases of Akali Phula Singh's Samadh and the Gurdwara of Hafizabad are some important instances. See Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp.101-2.

18. The word *Akali*, literally meaning immortal, was first used by Guru Gobind Singh for those of his followers who were prepared to sacrifice their all for the protection of their religious places. Their dark blue garments, typical head-dress (consisting of a tall conical turban, quoits, double-edged swords and Kirpan) and their fanatical temperament made them zealous fighters for religious causes. Because of their fanatical and violent character they came to be known as Nihangs (dragons). They were known for their purity of character and sincerity of conviction and commanded great respect from the Sikh community. In the field of religion, they enjoyed a unique position and came to be regarded as the guardians of the Akal Takhat at Amritsar and other important Gurdwaras. During the dark days of Sikh history (1708-99) they had to undergo great hardships in keeping alive the torch of Sikhism. But during the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule and after the annexation and consequent tranquility in religious affairs, most of them retired to an easy life and lost much of their old spirit. *Mahankosh*, p.527; *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp.443-7; and Baba Prem Singh Hoti's Preface to the biographical account of *Akali Phula Singh*. (Panjabi).

19. First issue of the daily *Akali* quoted by its editor, Hira Singh Dard in his memoirs, *Merian Kujh Itihasik Yadan*, p.153; Speech of Sardar Tara Singh, M.L.C., in the Panjab Legislative Council delivered on 8 July 1925, *Proceedings*; Vol.VIII-A, July 1925.

20. The Gurdwara, built in memory of Guru Nanak's visit to that place, came to be popularly known as Babe-di-Ber because the Guru sat under a Ber tree there. For a detailed account see Giani Kartar Singh, *Babe-de-Ber Sialkot*, pp.10-15.

21. *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.124.

22. Ibid.,p.131.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. According to the *Amritsar District Gazetteer*, the city of Amritsar, earlier called Ramdaspur and Guru-ka-Chak, was founded by the fourth Guru, Ram Dass, on the 500 *bighas* of land given by Emperor Akbar in A.D.1577 (pp.1,20).

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, built the Temple in 1589. The sixth Guru, Hargobind, built the Akal Takhat and declared it as the Sikh seat of temporal authority. In its earlier stages, the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat were looked after by competent and pious priests like Bhai Mani Singh. But during the period of the persecution of the Sikhs at the hands of the Mughal Governors of Panjab and later by the Abdali invader, Ahmad Shah, the control of these two important Sikh centres passed on to the Udasi Mahants. During the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule the shrine was richly decorated with marble and gold plates and came to be known as the Golden Temple. A rich revenue-free jagir was also attached to these shrines. After the annexation of the Panjab to the British India in 1849, the British Government took over the control of these two places and appointed a Committee of ten members headed by a *Sarbrah* to look after their day-to-day affairs. (John Maynard, 'The Sikh Problem in the Panjab' in the *Contemporary Review*, September 1923, p.295). While the *Sarbrah* was busy pleasing his appointing authority - the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar - the priests indulged in all sorts of evil practices, such as misappropriation of offerings and other valuables. These places had been converted into hunting places for rogues where brothels were run, pornographic literature sold and innocent women visiting the temples raped. *Jiwan Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid*, p.121.

26. The officially appointed *Sarbrah* was used by the Government to condemn the Sikh organisers of the Komagata Maru. Earlier, the priests of the Sikh *Takhats* were moved to issue a *Hukamnamah* condemning the Singh Sabha Movement, and later the activities of the Ghadrites, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp.90-1.

27. *Jiwan Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid*, p.121; Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, pp.40-1.

28. Resolutions of the Sikh League, Amritsar, Resolution No.14.

29. *Khalsa Advocate*, May-June, 1906; *The Panjab*, May 1906.

30. Resolution No.14 quoted in Note 28.

31. Panjab Legislative Council *Proceedings*, 13 March 1920.

32. Ibid.

33. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, p.41.

34. Ibid.,p.42.

35. *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.149.

36. Ibid.

37. Confidential Report dated 26 March 1921 from the Officiating Chief Secretary, Panjab Government, to Home Department, Government of India.

38. According to the practice followed in the Golden Temple the 'low-caste' Sikhs could visit it at a special time fixed for the purpose. They could not touch their *Karah Prasad* and had to engage the services of a man of 'higher caste' to carry it to the Temple. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, pp.61-2; Kartar Singh Jhabbar, *Akali Morche-te-Jhabbar*, pp.63-4.

39. Principal Niranjan Singh, *Jiwan Yatra Master Tara Singh*, p.71; also his reminiscences published in the *Jathedar*, 20 August 1967.

40. The Committee consisted of the following members:

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

1. Professor Teja Singh
2. Bawa Harkishan Singh
3. Bhai Deva Singh
4. Bahadur Singh Hakeem
5. S.Teja Singh Bhuchar
6. Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar
7. S.Chanda Singh
8. Dr.Gurbux Singh

Akali Morche-te-Jhabbar, p.61.

41. File No.459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

42. Jhabbar, op.cit.,pp.79-80.

43. This Gurdwara was founded by Guru Arjan in A.D.1500. Besides being a place of worship it is also a special refuge for lepers who still visit the place in thousands to get cured after a dip in the holy tank. Teja Singh. *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* p.197.

44. According to an eyewitness, the moral degradations of the Mahants had reached its climax by 1920. They had the audacity to declare publicly that 'Durbar Sahib is our shop, like other shops of people'. The son of a priest was quoted as having said 'We will dishonour those women who will visit Durbar Sahib. Those who want this should send their women to Durbar Sahib, others who do not want them to be dishonoured should not send them...' *Jiwan Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid,* p.175. According to another contemporary, some of the priests were found drunk while in attendance on the holy Granth. Thefts were very common. No woman's honour was safe in the temple. *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* p.198; Jhabbar op.cit.,p.96.

45. *Jiwan Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid,* p.174

46. Lachhman Singh was born in village Dharowali, district Gurdaspur, in A.D.1886 and was closely connected with the Sikh reformist and educational activities. During the early days of the reform movement he led Jathas to various Gurdwaras. He was the leader of the Akali Jatha to Nankana which met a tragic end at the hands of Mahant Narain Das and his men. See for details Gurbux Singh Jhabalia, *Shahidi Jiwan,* pp.59-98.

47. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* 198.

48. *Mohan Singh Vaid,* p.372.

49. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* p.207.

50. Undated letter written probably on 18 December 1920, published in the *Civil and Military Gazette,* 1 March 1921.

51. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas,* p.56.

52. In the case, seven Akalis were sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50 each. *The Akali,* 19 January 1922.

53. Next to Janam Asthan there are Gurdwaras like Bal Lila, the place where Nanak used to play during his childhood; Kiara Sahib, where the Guru made up the loss of a farmer whose field was spoilt by the Guru's buffaloes; Mal Sahib, where a snake is said to have spread its hood to protect the Guru

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

from the sun; Khara Sauda, where the Guru made a good bargain by feasting the hungry Sadhus; and Patti Sahib where the Guru wrote his first lesson on a wooden slate. Gurbux Singh Jhabalia, op.cit.,pp.82.3; Jhabbar, op.cit., pp.103-9 and Narain Singh's autobiographical account, *Kujh Haad Biti, Kujh Jag Biti*, pp.99-100.

54. The Mahant became a notorious drunkard and womaniser and contacted venereal diseases, of which he died soon after, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp.219-20.

55. This new Mahant, apart from indulging in drinking and adultery was also guilty of having invited dancing girls in the holy precincts on the occasion of the marriage of his nephew. Partap Singh Giani, *Gurdwara Sudhar: arthat Akali Lehar*, p.113.

56. *The Loyal Gazette*, 27 February 1921, quoted in the Panjab Press Abstracts, fortnight ending 28 February 1921. N.A.I.

57. According to the existing tradition no person could succeed to the Mahantship without prior approval of the Governor of Panjab or his authorised nominee, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India As I Knew It*. p.320. Even the Government Prosecutor in the *Nankana Sahib Case* admitted that 'Mahant's influence and purse had been at work everywhere'. Statement of H.A.Herbert quoted in *The Tribune*, 9 September 1921.

58. Assurances of help given to the Mahant by C.M. King during Mahant's meetings with him. Quoted in File No. 179-II/1922, Home-Political N.A.I.

59. In 1918, 13-year-old daughter of a retired Extra-Assistant Commissioner from Sind was raped by a Sadhu. In the same year, six women of Jaranwala were raped during their night's stay in the Gurdwara. *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.221; Jhabbar, op.cit.,pp.104-6.

60. Gurbux Singh Jhabalia, *Shahidi Jiwan*, p.74.

61. In the *Nankana Sahib Case*, H.A. Herbert, the Government Prosecutor, quoted a letter found in the safe of Mahant Narain Das in which his fellow Mahants exhorted him that 'in the event of the Akalis coming to take possession of Nankana shrine *he should not hesitate to kill and burn them.' Proceedings* quoted in *The Tribune*, 15 September 1921. The *Akali*, 16 April 1922, alleged that Mr.King had given a promise of help to Narain Das after accepting a bribe from him. In the Akali v. C.M.King Defamation Case, quoted in File No.179-II/1922, Home-Political and The *Akali*, 15 January 1923. C.M. King, in his Personal Explanation in the Panjab Legislative Council (13 March 1921) admits of Mahant's interview with him.

62. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 10 April 1921.

63. Fortnightly Report for the second half of November 1920. in File No.179-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

64. Personal Explanation given in the Panjab Legislative Council 13 March 1921, *Proceeding*. pp.80-1.

65. In reply to Col.Raghbir Singh's question in the Council on 11 March 1921, *Proceedings*, p.304.

66. In the Court Judgment all these preparations of the Mahant have been accepted. *Proceedings*. quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*. 7 August 1921.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

67. Panjab Legislative Council, *Proceedings*, March 1921.

68. Ibid.

69. Statement of Mahant Narain Das in File No.179-II/1922. In a statement the Mahant said, 'I was told by the Commissioner and other responsible Government officials that this was a religious matter and *I was told to make my own arrangements*.'

70. Undated letter (Probably written on or after 18 December, 1920), Appendix I.

71. This fact was brought to my notice by Dr.Ganda Singh in the course of a discussion on my paper 'Official Involvement in the Nankana Tragedy' read at the Punjab History Conference at Patiala on 29 September 1972. Dr.Ganda Singh said he remembers this letter having been quoted in some newspaper but could not exactly recollect its name and date. During my search for material in India and the United Kingdom I tried my best to trace this letter in the old newspapers and records but could not find the letter in question. However, in the old issues of *The Civil and Military Gazette* there is a reference to a servant of the Mahant, named Ladha, going to a shop on the Mall in Lahore and having brought 'boxes of pistol cartridges' on two different occasions (issue dated 30 April 1921).

72. Jhabbar, op.cit.,pp.105-6.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.,pp.112-3.

76. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 8 May 1921.

77. *The Tribune*, 12 April 1921.

78. Ibid.,10 July 1921.

79. Statement of Jhanda Singh, one of the four survivors of the Jatha, quoted in *The Tribune*, 10 July, 1921.

80. Ibid., 15 September 1921.

81. Ibid., 1 March 1922, Account by Lala Girdhari Lal.

82. Ibid.; also confirmed by Mahant's servant Urjan Das. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 7 August 1921.

83. Evidence of approver Amar Singh Patwari, *The Tribune*, 12 April 1921. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 22 February 1924, quotes Mr.Currie, the D.C.Sheikhupura, as having confirmed this.

84. Quoted in *The Tribune*, 9 September 1921.

85. Letter No. 30, 21 August 1922, from Lord Reading, the Viceroy and the Governor-General of India, to Hon'ble Edwin Samuel Montague, Secretary of State for India. *Reading Papers*, Mss Eur E 238, Vol.III. There are different versions regarding the exact number of persons killed at Nankana. The fact that the Mahant and his men tried to obliterate all traces of the killing by burning the dead bodies before the police or other officials could arrive and count the number made it difficult to determine the exact number of casualties. The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, in his first telephonic message to the Khalsa College,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Amritsar, put the number of dead at 20. This very low figure might have been given either due to incomplete information or on account of official anxiety to minimise the effect of the tragedy on the teachers and students of the Khalsa College. Both the Akali leadership as well as the Indian press expressed astonishment at the figures given by the Deputy Commissioner. Later, in a communique, the Panjab Government accepted the figure of 130 dead (Communique dated 27 February 1921, quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette* 23 October 1921).

86. Gurbux Singh Jhabalia, *Shahidi Jiwan*, pp.138-41. Most of these telegrams are quoted in the above work, pp.105-9.

87. Discussion on the police inaction in Nankana (*Proceedings* of the Panjab Legislative Council, 11 March 1921, p.304).

88. *The Sikh*, 3 March 1921. According to *Shahidi Jiwan* (p.141), Mahant Narain Das bribed Sub-Inspector Jang Bahadur who was asked by the Deputy Commissioner to count the number of dead. With his connivance the Mahant's men continued burning the dead till 4.30 p.m.

89. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 22 February 1921.

90. *Jhabbar*, op. cit.,p.121. This account contains an interesting dialogue between Jathedar Jhabbar and the Deputy Commissioner and other British officials, pp.122-4.

91. An ex-Honorary Magistrate and ex-President of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Harbans Singh Attari belonged to the group of moderate Sikhs and was a close associate of S.B.Sunder Singh Majithia. D.Petrie, Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on *Some Recent Developments in Sikh Politics*. Appendix, 'Leading Personages in Sikh Politics'.

92. The *Akali*, 24 February, 1921; *The Sikh*, 24 February 1921; *Bande Matram*, 2 March 1921; *The Khalsa Advocate*, 25 February 1921; *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.XIX, 397-9.

93. *The Brahman Samachar*, 9 March 1921 and the *Vedic Magazine*, March 1921.

94. *The Tribune*, 1 March 1921.

95. Ibid.,March 1 and 2.

96. Ibid.

97. For the English translation of the text of his speech see *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.XIX. pp.397-8.

98. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.82. *The Tribune* gives the date of the Mahatma's visit as 1 March and quotes the news in its issue of 2 March, while in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Vol.XIX.p.397) the date is given as 3 March. The Akali sources repeatedly mention about Mahatma's visit but do not give the exact date. *The Civil and Military Gazette* has quoted the Mahatma's advice to the Akalis in its issue of 8 March 1921.

99. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.XIX, p.401.

100. Ibid., pp.420-1; The Sikh League expressed lack of confidence in the official Enquiry Committee and appointed an unofficial Committee with Mahatma Gandhi as Chairman and Sardar Kharak Singh and S.Jaswant Singh Jhabbal as members.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

But as the Mahatma refused to act on the Committee another one was suggested which had Dr.Saif-ud-din Kitchlew as Chairman and Baba Kharak Singh, Prof.Ruchi Ram Sahni, Sardar Sujan Singh and Sardar Sant Singh as members, *The Tribune*, 13 March and 17 April 1921.

101. Baba Kartar Singh Bedi, son of Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi of Rawalpindi, was a big landlord of Montgomery district and an intimate associate of Mahant Narain Das. He had great influence with the British officials in the Panjab and was an Honorary Captain, a Civil Judge and an Honorary Magistrate and also a nominated Member of the Panjab Legislative Council. It was he who arranged a meeting of all the Mahants at Lahore on 19-20 February 1921 to decide a common programme against the Akali Movement. During its early phase he worked against the movement and helped the authorities in the Panjab. It was because of his anti-Akali activities that he was declared a *Tankhahia*. But towards the end of 1923 he changed his loyalty over to the Akalis and after getting his Tankhah (sin) remitted at Akal Takhat again became a popular religious leader of the Sikhs.

102. P.L.C. *Proceeding*, March 1921.

103. Fortnightly Reports on the Political Sitation in File No.179-II/1922. Home-Political, N.A.I.

106. Letter from C.M.King to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi, quoted earlier.

107. Ibid.

108. Evidence in the *Nankana Case, Proceedings in The Civil and Military Gazette*, 8 August 1921.

109. File No.179-II/1922, Home-Political. N.A.I.

110. Judgement quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 28 December 1921.

111. Letter dated 4 May 1921 from Edwin Samuel Montague to Lord Reading. Quoted in the *Reading Papers*. Mss. Eur.E 238, Vol.III (Microfilms in the Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi).

112. Note by Lord Reading on the petition of Mahant Narain Das, in File No.179-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

113. Note by John Maynard, Home Member, Panjab. File No.179-II/1922. Home-Political, N.A.I.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

116. D.O.Letter from S.P.O' Donnel to Mr.Trench. File 282-315 & KW.

117. P.L.C. *Proceedings*, March 1921.

Chapter 3

1. *Akali*, 10 November 1921.
2. *Panth Sewak*, Combined issue November 9-16, 1921.
3. *Akali*, 20 November 1921.
4. *Bande Matram*, 26 November 1921. For other newspaper comments see Panjab Press Abstract for the fortnight ending 30 November 1921. N.A.I. New Delhi

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

5. Report by Sant Singh, D.S.P. Criminal Intelligence, File No. 459/1921; I-17/1921, Home-Political, N.A.I.

6. *The Civil and Military Gazatte*, 22 November 1921.

7. Summary of News from Col. C. Kaye to S.P.O'Donnel dated 16 November 1921, File 459/1921.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. According to the report, three Sikh constables of the Railway Police had resigned on non-cooperation grounds.

11. Ibid., Note by H.D.Craik, dated 26 November 1921.

12. *Akali*, 29 November 1921.

13. Ibid; Among others arrested were Teja Singh Samundri, Zaildar Harnam Singh and Pandit Dina Nath, Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Ajnala, text of the judgment quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 4 December 1921.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. *Akali* dated 30 November 1921. Those arrested included S. Kharak Singh, President of S.G.P.C., S. Mehtab Singh, Secretary, Master Sunder Singh Layallpuri, Bhag Singh, Gurcharan Singh and Hari Singh.

17. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 14 October 1921.

18. C.I.D. Report quoted in File No. 459/1921.

19. Ibid.

20. *Akali*, 2 December 1921.

21. Ibid.

22. C.I.D. Report dated 13 December 1921 in File No. 459/1921.

23. *Akali*, 15 November 1921.

24. Quoted in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXII, p. 170.

25. Ibid., pp. 208-9.

26. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 2 December 1921.

27. Panjab Government Communique 12 January 1922, File No. 459-II/1922.

28. Komma, 'The Sikh Situation in the Punjab', Fortnightly Review September 1923.

29. Ibid.

30. *Confidential Papers of Akali Movement*, p.11.

31. Panjab Government Communique, 12 January 1922, File-459/II/1922. Home-Political, N.A.I.

32. Partap Singh, *Gurdwara Sudhar: arthat Akali Lehar*, p. 142.

33. The Civil and Military Gazette (4 December 1921) gives the following account:

'Sardar Kharak Singh asked whether the case against him was by the Government, and being told that it was, he said that a the Government was the prosecutor

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

and the court its servant, he did not want to make any statement to the court, because a party could not arrogate to itself the functions of a judge. The accused's position as President of the Panth (the Sikh Nation) was similar to that of the United States of America, France and Germany'. This is confirmed by most of the contemporary accounts such as the *Gurdwara Reform Movement, the Gurdwara Sudhar, Akali Morchian da Itihas* and *Baba Kharak Singh Abhinandan Granth.*

34. Court Proceedings in the case Crown p. Iharak Singh and others, *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 4 December 1922.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. According to *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 15 February 1922, Master Tara Singh and other extremists in the Akali leadership threatened to persuade the students of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, to go on strike in case the Managing Committee of the College inivited the prince. Therefore, the College authorities had to give up the plan of welcoming the prince to the College.

39. Situated in village Ghokewala of Ajnala Tehsil and about twenty kilometers from Amritsar, Guru-ka-Bagh is built in memory of two Sikh Gurus—Arjun Dev and Tegh Bahadur. The place was initially known as Guru-ka-Raur but later, after a garden was planted on the bare land by Guru Tegh Bahadur, the name was changed to Guru-ka-Bagh. Evidence of Wadhawa Singh in the case Crown v. Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh and others quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 21, November 1922.

40. According to an eyewitness the Mahant was keeping two mistresses, Isro and Jagdei, and had illicit relations with other women of bad reputation. (Evidence of Zaildar Harnam Singh in the case given in Note 39).

41. C.I.D. Report by Hakim Iquram-ul-Haq, *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* pp. 396-7.

42. According to the terms of the agreement the Mahant had agreed to (i) take *Amrit,* (ii) marry one of his mistresses and (iii) serve under the committee. He is said to have fulfilled all the conditions by taking *Amrit* on 8 February 1921 (and was renamed Joginder Singh) marrying Isro (Ishri) according to Sikh rites (she was renamed Gian Kaur) and agreed to serve under a Committee of Management appointed by the S.G.P.C. Evidence of Bhagat Jaswant Singh in the case Crown v. S.B. Mehtab Singh and others, *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 9 September 1922.

43. In Panjab Government's statement regarding Guru-ka-Bagh, the land is mentioned as a garden with a plantation of mango, *kikkar* and other trees and a 'considerable extent of valuable agricultural land' (File No. 914/1922). This is challenged by Teja Singh, the author of the *Gurdwara Reform Movement,* who writes 'the land is not and has never been valuable agricultural land but a mere grove of *kikkar* trees for which no revenue had ever been paid' (p.399)

44. The Mahant was offered the following terms under the new compromise: (i) a salary of Rs. 120 per month and (ii) a house at Amritsar. Both the terms he accepted. Proceedings in the Sikh Leaders' case, quoted in *The Tribune,* 27 September 1922.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

45. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.
46. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p.399.
47. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 13 September 1922.
48. Sohan Singh, Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, p. 157.
49. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p. 399, Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reforms in Sikh Shrines*.
50. File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.I.A.
51. Quoted in the P.L.C. Proceedings, March 1922, Vol. IV, pp. 470-71.

    See Appendix-II.
52. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 18, dated 23 August 1922.
53. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 29, dated 30 August 1922.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 14 September 1922. Later the Swami was arrested and tried for his speech in the Diwan that all the Hindus and the Muslims were with the Akalis and if the S.G.P.C. orders many Hindus and Muslims from the United Provinces were ready to come and offer themselves for arrest at Guru-ka-Bagh. The Civil and Military Gazette, 21 September 1921.
57. Mr. Verges was later approached through the higher authorities in London not to show the film in India or the United States.
58. C.I.D. Reports in File No. 949/1922; *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 14 September 1922.
59. Rev. C.F. Andrews was born on 12 February 1871 in Newcastles-on-Tyne and died on 5 April 1940 in Calcutta. He had come to India as a Missionary but being impressed by the Indian culture and values he seems to have changed his loyalities to India. Because of his frank criticism of the excesses of some of the lower level officials of the British Government and his love for the poor and down-trodden he was popularly called *Dina-Bandhu*. (friend of the masses) He supported the Indian struggle for freedom and national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru held him in high regard. For details on his life and activities see P.C.Roy Chaudhury, *C.F. Andrews: The Life and Times* (Somaiya Publications, Bombay, 1971) and *C.F. Andrews Centenary Volume*. Calcutta, 1972. See Appendix IV.
60. File No. 614-II/1922.
61. Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, pp. 171-2.
62. File No. 914/1922.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. D.O. letter dated 20 September 1922 from H.D. Craik to S.P. O'Donnel.
66. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political N.A.I.
67. Ibid.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

68. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, p. 146.

69. Ibid.

70. Macpherson and Illford Derrick, . *The Lathi and How to Use it.* (Given in Appendix III of the *Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Guru-ka-Bagh).*

71. Joint Statement of Press Representatives published in *The Tribune*, 4 October 1922.

72. Confidential Note dated 7 September 1922 by a C.I.D. official Bhagwan Das, File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

73. Reports by Bhagwan Das and other C.I.D. officials.

74. Apart from the old registers in the Panjab State Archives and in the personal collection of Dr. Ganda Singh, Patiala, Fortnightly and C.I.D. reports also confirm the above view.

75. Telegram No. D.8046, dated 25 September 1922 from the Viceroy to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political. N.A.I.

76. Ibid.; The following Members attended the Conference:

1. Lord Reading, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India.
2. William Vincent, Home Member.
3. Sir Malcolm Hailey, Finance Member.
4. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Law Member.
5. Sir Edward Maclagan, Governor of Panjab.
6. John Maynard, Finance Member (Panjab).
7. Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Revenue Member.
8. Mian Fazl-i-Husain, Education Member.
9. Lala Harkishan Lal, Agriculture Member.
10. H.D. Craik, Chief Secretary, Panjab, in attendance.

77. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 183.

82. *The Tribune*, 4 October 1922.

83. The Sub-Committee consisted of the following Members:

1. S. Srinivas Iyenger, ex-Advocate General, Madras High Court (President),
2. J.M. Sen-Gupta, Barrister, Calcutta,
3. S.E. Stokes,
4. Muhammad Taqui,
5. M.V. Abhink, and
6. Ruchi Ram Sahni (Secretary).

84. *The Tribune*, 4 October 1922 and *Akali*, 11 September 1922.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

85. *Congress Enquiry Committee Report.*

86. Beating of the Akalis at Guru-ka-Bagh was witnessed by the representatives of the papers like *Manchester Guardian,* London Times and *National Herald* and *Hind.* Quoted in the Panjab Press Abstracts, 1922. As pointed out earlier, Capt. A.L. Verges, an American cinematographer, greatly exposed the police highhandedness and prepared a short film entitled 'Exclusive Picture of India's Martyrdom'. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

87. Note dated 17 November 1922 by S.P. O'Donnel, File No. 914/1922; Pyarelal Bedi. *Harvest from the Desert: The Life and Work of Sir Ganga Ram.* p.253.

88. Statement of Mr. H.D. Craik in reply to a question by M. Ganpat Singh in the Punjab Legislative Council, *Proceedings,* 1922, Vol. IV, pp. 488-9; *Akali Darshan* gives the figures of arrested as 5603.

89. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

90. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 250. Government announced the settlement of the dispute on 9 November 1922 while the above-mentioned Communique had appeared on 4 November 1922.

91. P.L.C. *Proceedings,* November 1922.

92. H. D. Craik mentioned the fact of a public-spirited man being helped and encouraged by officials in his letter to S.P.O'Donnel (File No. 914/1922) and John Maynard admitted in the course of his speech in Panjab Legislative Council in November 1922. Vol. IV, pp. 590-1.

93. Shiv Narain Mishar, *Akali Darshan,* pp. 91-4.

94. Ibid., p. 93; Pyarelal Bedi, *Harvest from the Desert,* p.253.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. It is not relevant here to discuss the details of the causes leading to Hindu-Muslim riots. For details see Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines* (chapter on Hindu-Muslim Riots at Amritsar), pp. 96-99.

98. Ibid.

99. D.O. letter No. 13722-Judl.. dated 23 April 1923, from H.D. Craik, Chief Secretary, Panajb, to J. Crear, Home Department, Government of India, File No. 112-II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.

100. File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

Chapter 4

1. Panjab Government's order No.23772 dated 12 October 1923 in File No. 28 of the Nabha Records (Chief Minister's Office) at the Punjab State Archives, Patiala. For further details see Chapter 5. Also see Appendix III.

2. Some spade-work in this direction has been initiated by the Punjabi University at Patiala. Apart from M.A. dissertations on Formation and Development of Parja Mandal in Patiala State (Joginder Singh) and Tenants Movement in the Patiala State (Mrs. Jaspal Kaur), a scholar, late Dr. Ramesh Walia received Ph. D. degree on The Parja Mandal Movement. Gursharan Singh's M.A. dissertation on The Akali Movement in the Phulkian States (1920-1938) is another pioneering attempt in this direction.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

3. While the Akali struggle in the Panjab was over in 1925 with the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill, the movement in the States continued up to 1938 and ultimately led to the formation of the Riyasti Parja Mandal in the Sikh States. See for details Ramesh Walia, *The Parja Mandal Movement in the Patiala and East Panjab States Union.*

4. See for a detailed account about the circumstances leading to Maharaja's abdication, author's paper on 'The Nature of the Abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha', read at the Panjab History Conference at Patiala, November 1973.

5. The Maharaja seems to have had a bad start. His sucession to the throne was marked by a conflict with the British officials, C.H. Atkins, the Political Agent and Sir Louise Dane, the Lt. Governor of the Panjab. While the Government insisted that he should be placed on the throne through the Political Agent, Ripudaman Singh objected to this procedure. He asserted that his succession to the throne was a matter of right and needed no British sanction or ceremony.

6. Note dated 29 January 1924 in File No. 628-3/1924, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

7. A Commission of Enquiry was set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Stuart, to enquire into the Patiala-Nabha dispute (over certain territories, extradition of offenders, murder of one Lal Singh and disappearance of a woman named Ishar Kaur, etc.) Out of eight charges against Nabha, six were proved and accepted as correct by the Viceroy. For details see *Findings of the Stuart Enquiry Commission,* in 3 Vols. in File No. 298 (Nabha Records) at the Panjab State Archives, Patiala; Lord Reading's remarks on the findings in File No. 628-3P, Foreign-Poltical, N.A.I. and Barbara Ramusack's 'The Incident at Nabha', *Journal of Asiatic Studies,* May 1969.

8. Letter dated 21 April 1923 from Narsingha Rao to G.D. Ogilive. File No. 628-3-P, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

9. Under the conditions initially decided, the Maharaja was to retain the salute and the titles; he was to live outside the State; was formally to abdicate when his son came to age; the heir was to remain in the charge of the Regency Government; Nabha was to pay Rs. 50 Lakhs to Patiala as compensation and was to retain certain houses for his own use. It was agreed that once 'these terms are approved and the Maharaja severs his connections with the administration, no further action would be taken against him in the light of findings of the Stuart Enquiry Committee'. For further details see note dated 7 June 1923 in File No. 628-3-P. Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

10. According to Lord Reading, the Maharaja sent his telegram accepting the above terms (a reference made by the Viceroy in his speech at Chelmsford Club, Simla on 29 October 1923). Letter dated 14 December 1923 from His Highness the Maharaja of Nabha to his Excellency Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, File No. 18 (Nabha Records), Panjab State Archives, Patiala; also in the *Reading Papers* at the India Office Library, London, MSS. Eur. E 235/25, pp. 544 'a' to 'h'.

11. Ibid.

12. In the first instance Peel questioned the policy of the Government of India in permitting Nabha to retire from the administration of his State without thorough investigations of highly irregular conditions described in Stuart's Report. But later he agreed to Government of India's policy for reasons of expediency but added futher conditions to those settled by the Government of India. Telegrams

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

dated 12 June 1923 from Reading to Peel; Peel to Reading, 14 June, Reading to Peel, 17 June and Peel to Reading 19 June, File No. 628-3-P-1924, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

13. Statement of Master Tara Singh in *Akali Leaders Case*, Vol.I, pp. 111-4, Report of meeting between Maharaja Ripudaman Singh and the Akali Deputation, *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, p. 114.

14. Ripudaman Singh's undated letter to the S.G.P.C. *Confidential Papers*, p.173.

15. *Caveeshar Papers* in Nehru Memorial Library; personal interview with Maharani Gurcharan Kaur of Nabha.

16. Statement of S.A. Dighe in the Files of the 'Hisotry of Freedom Movement in the Panjab', Patiala.

17. See for details Native Press Abstracts, (Panjab) June 1923 to March 1924, particularly *Akali-te-Pardesi*, *Kirpan Bahadur*, *Bande Matram*, *The Tribune*, in the N.A.I. and also cuttings from the papers like *Sachha Dhandora*, *Daler-i-Hind*, *Bir Akali* and *Quami Dard*, etc., in the personal collection of Dr. Ganda Singh, Patiala.

18. Simon de Montfort (Earl of Leicester, 1208-1265) though acquitted of the charges of oppressions had yet to yield to the demand of jealous Henry III for his resignation. For long he was popularly revered as a martyr and saint, known as 'Simon the Righteous', Webster's Biographical Dictionary, p. 1040.

19. The *Hukamnama* (Guru's order), now preserved in the Panjab Government Museum at Patiala, was issued by Guru Gobind Singh to Bhai Rama and Bhai Tiloka. For details about the Hukamnama see Rotary Club of Patiala, *Sewa Chakra* (special number on Baba Ala Singh).

20. Telegram No. P-799-S, dated 12 June 1923 from His Excellency the Viceroy to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, File No. 628-3-P/1924, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

21. Ibid. Note dated 29 January 1924.

22. Letter dated 7 July 1924 from Minchin to Ogilive.

23. Ibid.

24. *Akali*, 13 August 1923 also *Kirpan Bahadur*, *Qaumi Dard* and the *Bir Akali* (from a file of newspaper cuttings, P.S.A)

25. Ibid.

26. *The Nation*, 15 August 1923.

27. *Kesri*, August 1923.

28. Ibid.

29. Proceedings of the Cocanada Session of the Indian National Cogress 31 December 1923, Nehru Memorial Library.

30. Bhai Jodh Singh was particularly against the S.G.P.C. taking up the Nabha issue as he felt it was a purely political issue and as such should not be taken up by the S.G.P.C. Author's personal interview with Bhai Jodh Singh.

31. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 22 August 1924.

32. Ibid.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

33. Statement of S.A. Dighe in the file of the 'History of Freedom Movement' in the Punjabi University, Patiala.

34. Cuttings from the newspapers regarding Nabha in the collection of Dr. Ganda Singh, Files No. 64-68, 70-71.

35. Ibid.

36. Shiromani Akali Dal Resolutions quoted in File No. 628-3P, Foreign-Political/ 1924, N.A.I.

37. *Akali-te-Pardesi*, quoted in the above-mentioned File, p.30.

38. *Akali-te-Pardesi*, 9 July 1923.

39. Press Communique No. 5, 9 July 1923.

40. Ibid.

41. The Sikh community of Delhi held a big demonstration in favour of the Maharaja, marched through the principal streets barefooted and with black flags and banners 'Truth will Triumph'. They were escotred by the Hindus and Muslims. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 12 September 1923.

42. Press Communique No. 5, 9 July 1923.

43. S.G.P.C. Communique 10 July 1923 quoted in File No. 623-3P, pp. 183-4.

44. I bid., p. 86.

45. File No 82 & K.W./1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

46. Out of 175 members only six voted against the move. Mark the contrast. In the beginning the majority was in favour of a 'moderate line of action'. But in a period of less than a month Akali leadership was able to mobilise public opinion through press and platrom for a strong and immediate action. The moderates were thus elbowed to fall in line with the extremists.

47. File No. 628-3-P, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.; The Civil and Military Gazette, 24 November 1923.

48. S.G.P.C. Resolution quoted in Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines.*

49. File No. 401/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. After the abdication of the Maharaja the administration of the State was put under the charge of a British Administrator. Later the Governor of Panjab agreed to the appointment of a Council of Regency during the minority of Maharaja's son Partap Singh. According to Bhai Jodh Singh, the Government had informally agreed with him that the Council would have a Sikh President and the majority of its members would be Sikhs. But as the Akali leadership did not want anything short of the restoration of the Maharaja, the proposal for a Council of Regency fell through and the British Administrator continued to be in the saddle. At the time of the Akali morcha at Jaito, Wilson-Johnston, who was earlier the Chief Secretary to the Government in Panjab, was the Administrator, *Confidential Papers*, pp. 298-9 and S.G.P.C. Communique No. 9, 17 August 1923.

53. For details see File No. 28 (Nabha Records) in the P.S.A.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

54. I bid., File No. 70.

55. I bid., for detailed Resolutions. On the basis of a personal interview with Inder Singh of Mor and Pritam Singh of Kila Raipur.

56. According to the reports sent by Wilson-Johnston, Administrator of Nabha, to the Chief Secretary of the Panjab, the organisers of the Diwan had called upon the Sikhs to 'assemble and turn out the British dacoits who had seized the State and forcibly expelled the Maharaja...' D.O. letter dated 7 September 1923 from Wilson-Johnston to C.A.H. Townsend, Chief Secretary, Panjab, File No. 628-3P, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

57. The report submitted by Zora Singh, the Nazim of Phool, who witnessed the proceedings of the Diwan and was reporting the events to the Administrator at Nabha, is very relevant in this context, 'The Diwan might have dispersed had not Inder Singh been arrested. Now they have determined to remain here until the departure of state forces. I have also come to know that they have got some promises of help from the S.G.P.C. If it is so, the agitation will not be put down easily.' File No. 70 (Nabha Records) at P.S.A. Patiala.

58. Ibid.

59. DISRUPTION OF THE AKHAND PATH

There are divergent views about the disruption of the *Akhand Path* at Jaito. The S.G.P.C. alleged that the 'armed soldiers in uniform literally dragged the man reading the Granth' (*The Tribune*, 18 September 1923). The official version contradicts the Akali charge. According to the Statement of Gurdial Singh, Assistant Administrator of Nabha, published in the Pioneer, 6 October 1923, 'The Path was not interrupted even for a second. The Akali who was reciting at the time was asked to leave his place when our man had taken his seat by the side of the Akali and had begun the recital.... 'Nazim of Phool and evidence of Mir Muhammad Ali, in the case Crown v. Mehtab Singh and others, mention the name of Bhai Atma Singh, who took over the Path from Inder Singh (*The Civil and Military Gazette*, 16 January 1924). The evidence of the Superintendent of Police, Nabha, in the court of Lala Amar nath. Sessions Judge, Nabha also confirms the above view (*The Civil and Military Gazette*, 16 May 1924).

From the perusal of the initial official reports about the incident it appears that the *Path* had come to be disturbed in the process of the State soldiers trying to remove the Akalis from the place where the *Path* was going on. From the letter of Wilson-Johnston, the Administrator of Nabha. to the Viceroy about the incident: 'The place where they were holding the Diwan is now turned into a camping ground for our soldiers. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* was removed and taken to the Dharmsala with all honours by the Sikh soldiers who were ready for the purpose beforehand...' The fact that the Granth Sahib was removed establishes that the reading of the *Akhand Path* (which means continuous reading without even a minute's break) had come to stop for some time-for the period it was stopped from the Diwan to its resumption in the Dharamsala. It appears that at a later stage, when the officials realised the serious consequences that had resultd from their action, they issued statements in the press that 'the *Path* was not interrupted even for a second'. Guridal Singh's statement in *The Pioneer* is dated 6 October while Johnston's letter was written on 1 October 1923, (D.O.II.C.D.L., dated 1 October 1923) File No. 628-P-3, Foreign-Political, N.A.I.

60. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 94, undated.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

61. File No. 1/II/1924/Home-Political. N.A.I.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Secretary of State for India's telegram dated 18 October 1922 quoted in File No. 614/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I. For details see Chapter 5 of this book.

65. To avoid repetition, details of the circumstances leading to the S.G.P.C., Shiromani Akali Dal, etc., being declared 'unlawful associations' are not discussed here. These are discussed in Chapter 5 of this book.

66. Panjab Government's Press Communique dated 15 October 1923, quoted from the PLC Proceedings, October 1923, Vol. VII, 276-7.

67. Order No. 23772 (Home-Judicial) quoted from File No. 28 (Nabha Records) P.S.A., Patiala. See Appendix II of this book.

68. Akali Leaders' case, quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette.*

69. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of the World History*, p. 747.

70. Giani Nahar Singh, 'Akali Lehar', *Panjab*, p.228.

71. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, p.223.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Letter dated 11 February 1924 from the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to the Commissioner, Lahore Division.

75. Ibid.

76. *Milap*, 20 February 1924, quoted in the Native Press Reports (Panjab) 1924.

77. Statement of Mr. Zimand, *Quarterly Register*, April 1924. Also statements of Messrs. Niranjan Singh, Sodhi Jagat Singh, Sepoy Kishan Singh, Jathedar Jiwan Singh and Sewa Singh, etc.

78. File No. 1/II, 1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

79. Ibid.

80. S. Zimand's letter to Mahatma Gandhi dated 9 April 1924, quoted in the *Quarterly Register*, April, 1924. See Appendix VI of this book.

81. *Loyal Gazette*; *The Onward* and the *Hariana Tilak*, 24 February 1924 quoted from the Native Press Abstracts, 1924.

82. Letter of S. Zimand to Mahatma Gandhi quoted earlier.

83. *Quarterly Register*, April 1924.

84. S.G.P.C.'s *Struggle for Freedom of Religious Worship at Jaito*, p.8.

85. Statement of Messrs. Mahinder Singh, Harbans Singh and Bhagat Singh quoted in the *Quarterly Register*, April 1924.

86. Ibid., Statement of Mr. Gulab Singh.

87. S.G.P.C.'s *Struggle for Freedom of Religious Worship at Jaito*, p.9.

88. *Akali-te-Pardesi*, 9 March 1924. *Zamindar* of 25 February, 1924 wrote that 'even a machine-gun was used at Jaito'. S.G.P.C. Communique quoted in File No. 180/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

89. Report of the Judicial Magistrate (Balwant Singh) quoted in the *Quarterly Register*, April 1924; Also File No. 210 (Chief Minister, Nabha) in the Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

90. *Onward*, 24 February 1924.

91. *Loyal Gazette*, 24 February 1924.

92. *Akali-te-Pardesi*, 25 February 1924.

93. *Kesri*, 25 February 1924.

94. *Bharat*, 25 February 1924 (all quoted from the Native Press Abstracts, February 1924)

95. *Bande Matram*, 29 February 1924.

96. Report of the Indian National Congress about Jaito Firing.

97. Mahatma Gandhi sent the following message on this occasion, 'I need hardly assure the Akali Sikhs of my sympathy in the loss of so many brave men and many more being wounded....' *Collected* Works of *Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, p.211.

98. Proceedings of the Cocanada Session of the Indian National Congress, quoted, in *The Tribune*, 2 January 1924 and The *Akali*, 1-2 January 1924.

99. 'Report of the Enquiry Committe.' quoted in the *Quarterly Register*. April 1924.

100. Ibid.

101. S. Zimand's letter dated London 9 April 1924, Addressed to Mahatma Gandhi, quoted in the *Quarterly Register*, April 1924.

102. Report of the Akali Sahayak Bureau, issued by the Secretary, Indian National Congress. Records in the Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi.

103. For details of the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Akali leadership see Ganda Singh (Ed.) *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, pp. 45-55.

104. Letter dated 23 August 1924, from W. Malcolm Hailey, Governor of the Panjab, to De Montmorency, Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India, New Delhi, Hailery Papers, Mss Eug E 220/8-A.

105. Ibid., Letter dated 28 February 1924, from W. Malcolm Hailey to Malcolm Seton, India Office, London.

106. Telegram No. 00629, dated 19 March 1925 from the Viceroy to Hailey in Hailey Papers, Mss Eur E 220/7-A No. P & N Clair (No. 293) dated 19 March in Reading Papers, Mss eur 238/27.

107. Hailey's letter dated 3 Marh 1924, to Edward Maclagan, mss Eur E 220/6-A.

108. File No. 195 (Nabha State Records), Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

109. Extract from the Speech of Sir Malcolm Hailey made in the Panjab Legislative Council on 9 July 1925. For details see Proceedings.

110. D.O. letter No. C-56-J, dated 22 July 1925, from Wislson-Johnston, Administrator Nabha to J. Crerar, File 120/III/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

111. File No. 112-IV/1926, Home-Political, N.A.I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

112. Letter dated 4 March 1924, from Mahatma Gandhi to the Secretary, S.G.P.C., Ganda Singh (Ed.), *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, p. 53.

113. Ibid., p.114.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Telegram No. P-799-S, dated 12 June 1923, from His Excellency the Viceroy to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, quoted in File No. 628-3-P, Foreign-Political, 1924, N.A.I.

119. Letter of Mahatma Gandhi to the Akali leaders, quoted in Ganda Singh (Ed.), Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement, p.55)

120. The Akali leadership's silence over the Nabha issue was viewed with great satisfaction in the official circles. Writing to Alexander Muddiman, Hailey observed, 'You will, I am sure, note with interest that among numerous conditions of peace embodied in the resolution of the Committee, there is no mention of the unfortunate Maharaja of Nabha'. Letter dated 2 May 1925 in the Halley Papers, Mss Eur E 2207/7-B, I. O. L., London.

121. For text of the letter see Ganda Singh (Ed.), *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, pp. 12-4.

122. Census Report, 1921. For a detailed account, see Mohammed Hassan's Tarikh-i-Patiala (manuscript) in the P.S.A. and S.N. Banerjeee's History of Patiala, 2 Vols. (Typescript) in the collection of Dr Ganda Singh, Lower Mall, Paitala.

123. For a detailed account of the Maharaja's evil actions, see File 'where the Maharaja takes away a married woman and offers Rs. 5,000/- to her husband'. Indictment of Patiala, and the Memorial submitted by the Riyasti Parja Mandal and the All-India Peoples ' Conference to the Viceroy of India. P.S.A., Patiala.

124. His other titles were Major General, H.H. Saman-Amir-Ul-Umra Maharaja Dhiraj Rajeshwar Shri Maharaja-i-Rajgan Sir Bhupinder Singh. Mahendra Bahadur, etc. See author's article 'Patiala Past and Present' *Punjabi University Bulletin*, January 1966.

125. For a detailed account of the Patiala State's measures to combat the Akali Movement and activities of the Akalis in the Patiala State, see Sir Daya Kishan, Prime Minister, Patiala State's Note in the *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, pp. 183-92.

126. Note on the services rendered by Patiala in combating the dangerous Sikh agitation and the Akali Movement in the Panjab. File No. 125 Serial No. 538, Basta No. 18 in the Patiala Records (Prime Minister's Office) P.S.A.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.

129. File No. 459/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I. For details of the formation of the Committee see Chapter 3 of this book.

130. File No. 401/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

131. Jhabbar, *Akali Morche-te-Jhabbar*, pp. 179-80.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid., File 254/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

136. Patiala Darpan, p. 74.

137. Same as Note (11).

138. I bid.

139. Gurcharan Singh, Jiwan Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala, pp.27-6.

140. I bid.

141. I bid.

142. I bid.

143. File 76 at the Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

144. Gurcharan Singh, op. cit.

145. Notification dated February 129 issued under the orders of His Highness by the Home Minister. File No. 125. Patiala Records in the Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

146. Gurcharan Singh, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

147. Maharaja's letter dated 29 May 1925, to Malcolm Hailey and Hailey's reply dated 17 June 1925, in the Hailey Papers, Mss. Eur. E-220/7/B.

148. Founded by Raja Gajpat Singh, the Jind State had an area of 1268 sq. miles and population of 308, 183 and was being ruled by Maharaja Ranbir Singh at the time of Akali Movement, Census Reports for 1921.

149. File No. 100 in the Panjab State Archives contains the names of about a dozen villages which hosted the Akali Diawns.

150. For details see, Ramesh Walia, *Parja Mandal Movement in P.E.P.S.U.*, Punjabi University Patiala, 1972.

Chapter 5

1. For details of the circumstances leading to the Akali occupation of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat, see Chapter 2.

2. Confidential Memorandum on the Shiromani Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C., gives 16 November 1920 as the date which seems to be incorrect compared to the S.G.P.C. records and other contemporary accounts. Jhabar, *Akali Morche-te-Jhabbar*, p. 73. *Shahidi Jiwan*, p.29.

3. Confidential Memorandum, File 459/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

4. Ibid.

5. Jhabbar, op. cit., p. 73.

6. File No. 459/1922. In the Confidential Memorandum the number of members is given as 179 while the biographical account of Jathedar Jhabbar, *Gurdwara Reform Movement* and the S.G.P.C. sources put the figures at 175. My enquiries from the present leadership of the S.G.P.C. have revealed that the latter figure, i.e., 175, is correct.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

7. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, p. 165.

8. Sardar Sunder Singh Mahithia, a big landlord of Majitha (near Amritsar) had earned the displeasure of the Sikh community because of his pro-British attitude and his condemnation of the Sikh Ghadrites (Jhabbar, op. cit., p. 74). Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was the Government-appointed Sarbrah of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, Sardar Harbans Singh Attari was a moderate Sikh chief of village Attari, District Amritsar. See short biographical notes on Harbans Singh Attari and Sunder Singh Majithia in the 'Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on some recent developments in Sikh Politics, Appendix A, Leading Personages in Sikh Politics'.

From the perusal of the biographical account of Kartar Singh Jhabbar it appears that the moderate Sikh leadership was keen to capture the newly formed S.G.P.C. so as to use it as a base to bargain for high offices in the Government. While supporting the candidature of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia for the Presidentship of the S.G.P.C., Bhai Jodh Singh is said to have argued that Majithia's election as President would strengthen his claims for the Membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Jhabbar, op. cit., pp. 73-4.

9. The priests tried to instigate the Nihangs against the reformers but a near-clash was averted as a result of mediation of Baba Kehar Singh of Patti.

10. Confidential Memorandum, File 459/1922, Home-Political N.A.I.

11. Jhabbar, op. cit., Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*. For details see Chapter 2. of the book.

12. C.I.D. reports in File 459/II 1922, Home-Political N.A.I.

13. Confidential Memorandum.

14. File 492/1922.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. The new constitution guaranteed voting right to all Sikhs above 21 years of age who observed elementry rules of Sikh conduct, i.e., rising early in the morning, reading Sikh scriptures, giving 1/10th of the income in charity and keeping baptismal vow of five K's, Giani Nahar Singh, 'Akali Lehar' in the *Panjab*. Vol. II, pp. 220-1.

18. Born in June 1868, Kharak Singh belonged to a well-to-do family of Sialkot. He entered public life in 1912 when he was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 5th Sikh Educational Conference held in Sialkot. It was during the Akali struggle for reform of Gurdwara Babe-di-Ber at Sialkot that he joined the Akali Movement and thereafter remained the central figure in the Akali politics till 1935 when he was replaced by Master Tara Singh. He came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders during the non-cooperation movement in 1920; organised the Central Sikh League, a purely political body of the Sikhs, and remained a staunch non-cooperator and a nationalist till the end. Because of his unique sacrifices and leadership he earned the popular title of Betaj Badshah (uncrowned king) of the Panth. He died on 6 October 1962.

19. Prominent Members of the Executive Committee were: Teja Singh Samundri, Amar Singh and Jaswant Singh Jhabbal, Sardar Dan Singh Vachhoa. Master Tara Singh. Teja Singh of Chuharkana, Bhagat Jaswant Singh of Rawalpindi,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sarmukh Singh Jhabbal, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Master Sunder singh Lyallpuri (Editor of *Akali*), etc. For further details about the members see Confidential Memorandum.

20. For details see Chapter 3 of this book.

21. Proceedings of the Cocandada Session, N.M.M.L.

22. *Resolutions of the Sikh League*. Amritsar, Coronation Printing Works, Amritsar, 1920.

23. S.G.P.C. communique.

24. Niranjan Singh, *Jiwan Vikas*. p.76.

25. File 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I

26. For details see *K.M.Panikkar : An Autobiography*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1977, pp.48-54.

27. *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Vol. I, p. 45; Giani Partap Singh, *Akali Lehar*, p. 103; Akali Morche te Jhabbar, p.95. mentions the date as 24 Janurary 1921. According to Jathedar Jhabbar another name-Gurdwara Sewa Dal-was suggested by Bhai Arjan Singh but the Sangat did not approve of it and the name suggested by Jathedar Jhabbar was accepted.

28. Among others, the instance of planned forcible seizure of Nankana by the Akali Dal Khara Sauda Bar is most important. But the scheme could not be executed due to its disapproval by the S.G.P.C. For details see Chapter 2 of this book.

29. After the passage of the Bill in 1925, and the consequent division in the Akali leadership, the two organisations not only became independent of each other but also rivals. For details see *Jiwan Yatra Master Tara Singh*. pp. 96-106.

30. The word Akali, literally meaning immortal, was first used by Guru Gobind Singh for those of his followers who were prepared to sacrifice their all for the protection of their religious places. Their dark blue garments, typical head-dress (consisting of a tall conical turban, quoits, double-edged swords and Kirpan) and their fanatical temperament made them zealous fighters for a religious cause. Because of their fanatical and violent character, they came to be known as Nihangs (dragons). They were known for the purity of character and sincerity of conviction and commanded great respect from the Sikh community. In this field of religion they enjoyd a unique position and came to be regarded as the gaurdians of the Akal Takhat at Amritsar and other important Gurdwaras. During the dark days of Sikh history (1708-1799) they had to undergo many hardships in keeping alive the torch of Sikhism. But during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule and after the annexation of the Panjab and consequent tranquility in the religious affairs most of them retired to an easy life and lost their old spirit. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp. 443-7.

31. File 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

32. On the basis of personal interviews with Jathedar Pritam Singh and others.

33. File No. 459-II/1922. For details see Chapter 1 of this book.

34. Ibid.

35. S. S. Caveesher, 'Gurdwara Rakabganj da Jhamela' in the *Panjab*, Vol.II, p.213.

36. Confidential Memorandum, File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political. N.A.I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

37. Jhabbar, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

38. This account of the Jathas is based on the reports in Confidential Memorandum in file No. 459-II and Jhabbar, *Akali Morche te Jhabbar*. For a detailed account of the activities of Jatha No. 9, see Jhabbar, op. cit., pp. 88-5 and Chapter 2 of this work.

39. General Staff's Note on 'The Military Aspect of the Present Situation in the Panjab', File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

40. Ibid.

41. This obviously is the name given to Kirpan, (religious symbol of the baptised Sikhs) as in the absence of any restriction on its size there could not be much of a difference between a Kirpan and a sword.

42. For details see reports of Sant Singh, D.S.P., C.I.D. in File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.; A Note on the Sikh Conspiracy (1923-26) in File No. 235/26, Home-Political, N.A.I.

43. Confidential Memorandum, 459-II/1922.

44. General Staff's Note quoted in Footnote 39.

45. Jhabbar, op. cit., pp. 122-4. See also Chapter 2 of this book.

46. Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp. 300-2.

47. Confidential Memorandum.

48. Ibid.

49. The above analysis is based on the figures given in the earlier quoted Confidential Memorandum.

50. Ibid.

51. Based on the figures given in Chapter 2 of this book.

52. See Chapter 2 of this book.

53. General Staff Note,'The Military Aspect of the Present Situation in the Panjab', File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

54. 'A Note on the Akali Movement' in File No. 82 KW/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

55. Note on the Sikh Situation in File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

56. Note dated 18 February 1922. File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Vincent's note, 18 February 1922, File 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

60. For details see File 134-II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I. and Chapter 6 of this work.

61. File 459-II/1922, Home-Political N.A.I.

62. *Akali*, 2 November 1922.

63. Letter No. 23, 11 October 1922, from Viscount Peel, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, to Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, *Reading Papers*, Mss Eur E 238, Vol IV.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

64. Telegram dated 18 October 1922 from the Secretary of State to Lord reading quoted in File No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

65. D.O. letter dated 31 October 1922, from H.D. Craik to S.P. O'Donnel, file No. 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

66. Secret Notes on the 'Present Akali Situation' in the Hailey Papers, Mss Eur E 220/6-A, India Office Library, London; File 82 & KW/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

67. Telegram dated 18 October 1922, from the Secretary of State to Lord Reading, *Reading Papers*, Mss Eur E 238/IV.

68. Panjab Government's Press Communique date 15 October 1923, quoted in the P.L.C. Proceedings, Vol. VII, pp. 276-7 (October 1923).

69. Order No. 23772 (Home Department), Judicial, 12 October 1923 issued under the signatures of C.A.H. Townsend, Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, Panjab. Quoted in File No. 28 of Nabha Records (Chief Minister's Office) at the Panjab State Archives, Patiala. See Appendix III of this book.

70. S.G.P.C. Communique, 30 September 1923.

71. Ibid.

72. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 16 October 1923; Teja Singh, *Aarsee*, pp. 66-7: Giani Nahar Singh, 'Akali Lehar', in the *Panjab*, p.227.

73. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 2 November 1923.

74. Since the charges against these leaders could not be established so easily, the case dragged on till the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill in July, 1925. It is interesting that those who were arrested and were being tried on such serious charges as the 'Treason against the King Emperor' were released simply on making a written or verbal statement of working the Bill passed in 1925. *Master Tara Singh: Jiwan Sangharsh te Udesh*,pp.82-3.

75. *The Akali*, 7 November 1923.

76. Ibid.

77. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 9 January 1924.

78. The S.G.P.C. Communique No. 588 in File No. 1/IV/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I. In a confidential letter the Panjab Government advised these officials to put off their shoes before entering the Akal Takhat. But this could be dispensed with in case of an encounter with the Akalis. File No.1/IV/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I. According to Sir George Dunnett, his father, J.M. Dunnett, advised the concerned officials not to enter the Golden Temple premises with shoes on. (Author's interview with Sir George Dunnett, London June 1975)

79. *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Vol. I, pp.52-3.

80. S.G.P.C. Communique, No. 588, File No. I/IV/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

81. Official Statement in the Panjab Legislative Council, January 1924.

82. *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Vol. I, pp. 52-3.

83. S.G.P.C. Communique No. 593, quoted in File I/IV/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.; Jathedar Udham Singh's telegram to the Viceroy quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 11 Januray 1924.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

84. *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth,* Vol. I, pp. 52-3.

85. File I/IV/1924, Home-Political, N.A.I.

86. *Akali,* 1 November 1923.

87. Ibid.

88. *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 3 November 1923.

89. The book is now available for cousltation in the Proscribed Indian Books collection of the British Museum, London, where I have consulted it.

90. Ibid.

91. By a Notification dated 13 September 1926, the Panjab Government withdrew its earlier order dated 12 October 1923, declaring S.G.P.C. and allied organisations as 'unlawful associations'. By another Notification dated 17 January 1927, the Government recognised the newly formed S.G.P.C.

92. Address in the Council, 9 July 1925, Proceedings, Vol. IX-A;

93. Quoted in Dr. Ganda Singh's 'Introduction' to *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement,* p. xxii.

94. Address in the Council, 9 July 1925. See note 92 above.

95. Ibid.

96. *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 18 July 1925.

97. Ganda Singh, (Ed), *Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement.*

98. Ibid., pp. 166-7.

99. Ibid.

100. Proceedings of the General Committee meeting quoted in File No. 120/VIII, Home-Political, N.A.I.

101. Ibid.

102. D.O. letter No. 9132, dated 8 October 1925, from H. D. Craik to J. Crerar. Mian Fazl-i-Hussain, in his letter dated 5 August 1925, expressed his happiness over the passage of the Bill and its acceptance by the Akali leadership and the consequent split. He wrote: 'I believe the working of the Gurdwara legislation is now assured and the cleavage between the pro-Act and anti-Act has come to stay. This is much better than expected.' *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur 220/8-A.

103. Giani Nahar Singh, 'Akali Lehar' in the *Panjab,* p.235.

104. Ibid.

105. For details of the later Akali politics see Kailash Gulati, *Akalis: Past and Present*; Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect.*

Chapter 6

1. Sunder Singh Makhsuspuri, *Babbar Akali Lehar,* p.b..

2. C.I.D. Report in File 268/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

3. Judgement by P.J. Rust in the Akali Conspiracy Case, quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 6 June 1922.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

4. 'History of the Babbar Akali Movement' in File. 134/II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.
5. Babbar Akali Case, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 10 June 1923.
6. Ibid.
7. Babbar leaflet reproduced in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 5 October 1923.
8. Ibid., 6 June 1922.
9. Ibid., 30 August 1923.
10. Ibid., 5 October 1923.
11. Ibid.
12. The word 'reform' (Sudhar in Panjab), was the Babbar code for 'murder'.
13. Sunder Singh, op. cit., pp. 70-1.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Report in File 134-II/1923.
18. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 10 June 1923.
19. Sunder Singh, op. cit., pp. 98-9.
20. C.F. Isemonger's Evidence in the Babbar Akali Case, quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 31 October 1923.
21. File 134/II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.
22. Sunder Singh, op. cit., pp. 101-2.
23. See for details of the addresses presented by these associations to Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Panjab, G.R. Sethi's *Sikh Struggle for Gurdwara Reform* and the Private Papers of Malcolm Hailey in the India Office Library, London, Nos. Mss Eur E 220/41 to 45.
24. Ibid.
25. Panjab Government Communique dated 24 April 1923, File 134-II/1923. This account is confirmed by Sunder Singh's eyewitness account, *Babbar Akali Lehar.*
26. Babbar Declaration No. 1, issued under the signatures of Karam Singh Editor, Dhanna Singh and Udai Singh. Sunder Singh, op. cit., p.118.
27. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 24 July 1923.
28. File 234-II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.
29. 'Notes on measures against the Babbar Akali Movement' in File 134-II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.
30. Ibid.
31. Babbar Akali Case, quoted in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 9 August 1923.
32. File 134-II/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

35. Ibid.
36. Babbar leaflet quoted in above file.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Sunder Singh, op. cit., p. 199.
44. File 134-II/1923.
45. Sunder Singh, op. cit., pp. 229-30.
46. For details see 'My Friend the Revolutionary', *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 487-9.
47. Satya Rai, *Evolution of Heroic Traditions in Panjab in the Modern Times*, Punjabi University Patiala.

Chapter 7

1. For details see 'Notes on the Present Akali Situation with Suggestion for Future Policy' in *Hailey Papers*, Mss. Eur E 220/7-A, I.O.L. London; File 179-II/1922, Home Political, N.A.I.
2. File 179-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. 'Resolutions of the Sikh League' (printed) British Museum Library, London.
6. Ibid.
7. P.L.C. *Proceedings*, March 1921.
8. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 7 April 1921.
9. File 944/1921, Home-Political, N.A.I.
10. Statement of Mian Fazl-i-Husain in the P.L.C., 11 August 1922.
11. Ibid.
12. Statement of Sir John Maynard in the P.L.C., 31 July 1922.
13. P.L.C. *Proceedings*, November 1922.
14. Ibid.
15. 'A Brief Statement of Panjab Government's Policy with Regard to Gurdwara Question', File 914/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.
16. See for details Chapter 4 of this book.
17. Ibid.
18. Commenting about his relations with the Sikhs in one of his letters to Malcolm Hailey, he wrote, 'As I told a large gathering of Sikh soldiers a short time

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

ago, I was proud to count them among my best friends in the world.' Some of their community-men in whose custody, I would willingly leave my wife and children knowing that they would guard them with their lives'. Letter dated 16 January 1924, *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/5-D. I.O. L.

19. Panjab Government Communique on the failure of the Birdwood negotiations, issued from Simla on 3 June 1924, *The Civil and Military Gazette,* 5 June 1924.

20. Sir William Birdwood, *The Khaki and Gown*, Ward Lock and Co., London, 1941. p.372.

21. Letter dated Lahore, 1 March 1924, from Sir Edward Maclagan, to Sir Malcolm Hailey. *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/6-A. I.O.L.

22. Ibid., Letter dated 3 March 1924 from Hailey to Maclagan.

23. Ibid.

24. Communique dated 13 June 1924, issued by the Secretary of the Akali Sahayak Bureau, Amritsar, The *Akali*. 16 June 1924.

25. Letter dated Simla 2 July 1924, from Hailey to Sir Valentine, London, *Hailey Papers*, Mss Eur E 220/6-A. I.O.L., London.

26. Ibid.

27. Letter dated 30 August 1924, from Hailey to Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member of Council, *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/6-A. I.O.L., London.

28. Letter dated 22 January 1925 to Malcolm Hailey to Lord Reading. *Reading Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/7-A.

29. Letter dated 29 September 1924 from Hailey to Percival, London. *Hailey Papers.*

30. Letter dated 28 November 1924 from Hailey, to Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member of the Council. *Hailey Papers*, Mss Eur E 220/6-C. I.O.L., London.

31. Letter dated 30 August 1924 from Hailey to Sir Alexander Muddiman, *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/6-B, I.O.L., London.

32. Quoted in Hailey's letter dated 29 October 1924 to Alexender Muddiman. *Hailey Papers,* Mss Eur E 220/6-C. I.O.L., London.

33 Ibid.

34. Letter dated 23 March 1925 from Hailey to Hon'ble Sir Narasimha Sarma, Law Member of the Council. *Hailey Papers*, Mss Eur E 220/7-A.

35. P.L.C. *Proceedings*, May 1925. VIII-A, p. 1105.

36. Note for His Excellency and Lord Reading's assent on it. File 120-VIII/ 1925.

37. Notification No. 4288-S Home-General, dated 12 October 1925, issued by the Panjab Government. File No. 50-xxxiii/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

38. 'Akali Lehar', *Panjab*, Vol. II p. 233, File No. 50-xxiii/1925, Home Political, N.A.I

39. Panjab Government's Notification dated 13 September 1927.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Chapter 8

1. On the basis of a statement by S. Tara Singh, M.L.C. in the Panjab Legislative Council, 7 May 1925. P.L.C. *Proceedings* May 1925, p.1105. While the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* confirm the above figures on the basis of a news item in the *Young India*, 26 February 1925 (Vol. XXVI, p.197), Giani Nahar Singh, a near contemporary puts the figures as 40,000 arrested and 500 dead, *Panjab* (edited by Dr. Ganda Singh), Vol. II, p.234.

2. Letter dated 24 July 1924, from O' Brien to Malcolm Hailey in the *Hailey Papers*, Mss Eur 220/6-a.

3. File 158/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

4. *Hailey Papers*; also File 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

5. File 49-I/1925, Home-Political, N.A.I.

6. File 158/1925, Home-Political. N.A.I.

7. Along with the males the Sikh women also obtained a right to vote in the Gurdwaras' elections, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 23 June 1925.

8. File 112-IV 1925, Judicial, N.A.I.

9. Ibid. In the Schedule I appended to the 'Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill' the number of the shrines is given as 244 which were declared to be under undisputed Akali control.

10. Prominent among those who constituted the new leadership were: Niranjan Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Teja Singh (Professors) Mehtab Singh, Bhag Singh, Gurcharan Singh, etc., (Vakils) Sunder Singh, Mota Singh, Tara Singh, Hira Singh Dard, Sujan Singh and Sohan Singh Josh (Masters/Headmasters). Quoted in Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, p. 473.

11. *Kharak Singh Abhinandan Granth*, p. 188. S.L. Malhotra, *Gandhi: An Experiment with Communal Politics*, pp. 178-9. For a biographical note on Baba Kharak Singh see Note 18, Chapter 5 of this book.

    Born on 24 June 1885, Tara Singh developed anti-British feelings during his college days at Amritsar. He was one of the student leaders in the demonstration organised against Sir Charles Riwaz, the Lt. Governor of the Panjab, in 1907. During the Akali Movement he came to the forefront and emerged as one of its top leaders. He was an extremist and non-cooperator. He was also a member of the A.I.C.C. He supported the Congress first during the non-cooperation movement and later by leading a Jatha of 100 Akalis during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. However, during the Second World War, he developed differences with Mahatma Gandhi over the Sikh help to the British Government in the recruitment and left the Congress to help the Government in the war efforts. 'Gandhi-Tara singh Correspondence', *Master Tara Singh: Jiwan, Sangarsh te Udesh*. Ganda Singh's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, S.P. Sen. (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 323-5.

12. Report of the 38th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Cocanada, 28-31 December 1923, N.M.M.L.; *The Tribune*, 1 January 1924.

13. This Akali-Congress alliance in the Panjab was viewed with great concern in the official circles. Hailey in his letter to Mr. Seton at the India Office, London, wrote:

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The one interesting new feature in the situation is the deliberate attempt of the Gandhi faction of Swaraj to capture the Akalis...It would, of course, be in some sense a dangerous game.' *Hailey Papers*, Mss Eur 220/6-A. I.O.L. London.

14. By an order dated 12 October, 1923, the Government declared the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Jathas as 'unlawful associations'. See Appendix III of this book.

15. Quoted from the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Cocanada Session. N.M.M.L.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ruchi Ram Sahni, a prominent Panjab Congress leader, greatly helped the Akali Movement by publishing his eyewitness accounts about the police excesses at the Guru-ka-Bagh in *The Tribune* and other papers. He also helped the Akalis in the drafting of their Communiques. See Teja Singh's *Arsee*, p.2.

20. Mr. A.T. Gidwani was made incharge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau and on his arrest during the Akali agitation at Nabha, K.M. Panikkar succeeded him.

21. See for an interesting account of Nehru's experience in the Nabha Jail Chapter XVI of his Autobiography: 'an Interlude at Nabha' pp. 109-16. For an interesting account about the arbitrary justice in the State see Nehru's statement in Nabha Jail (Appendix V of this work) and the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, S. Gopal (Ed.), Vol. I., pp. 369-86. For the statements of K. Santhanam and A.T. Gidwani see the *Panjab Past and Present*, Ganda Singh (Ed.), April 1974, pp. 183-304.

22. S.G.P.C. resolution quoted in File No. 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

23. As pointed out earlier, Kharak Singh was greatly responsible for uniting the Akalis and the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders held him in high esteem. When he was released from jail in June 1927 Gandhi blessed him with long years of service to the country in its fight for freedom. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXIV, p.5.

24. For detailes see Note 33, Chapter 3 of this book.

25. *Akali-te-Pardesi*, 25 December 1923.

26. Hailey Papers (Mss Eur E 220, series 6 A, B, C and 7 A and B and 8-B) in the India Office Library, London, speak volumes on the policy of divide and rule. A perusal of large number of his private and confidential letters and the addresses he delivered at the meetings of officially sponsored anti-Akali associations shows that he had succeeded to a great extent in isolating the Akalis by systematic implementation of his policy and ultimately compelled the Akali leadership to compromise with the Government. Nationalist leaders' support to the Akalis at this critical juncture alone could secure the Akalis the favourable terms in the Bill.

27. For a detailed account of the Bharat Naujawan Sabha and the Kirti Kissan Party see Satya Rai, *Evolution of the Heroic Tradition in Panjab in Modern Times*. and S.C. Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Panjab*. Concept Publishers, Delhi, 1977.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

28. Secret Memorandum, Note 37, Chapter 1 of this work.

29. *Census of India*, 1921, Vol XV, p. 172.

30. File 459-II/1922, Home-Political, N.A.I.

31. Ibid.

32. Quoted in B.R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan and Partition of India*, p. 84.

33. This is the opinion about the Sikh character, Sir Michael O' Dwyer, *India As I Knew It* and the Sedition Committee Report. The British officials thought that the Akalis would not able, to be remain non-violent for a long time.

34. *The Tribune*, 20 September 1922. For futher details see Appendix IV of this work.

35. File No. 71/1923, Home-Political, N.A.I.

36. For a detailed account, see Chapter 3 of this book.

37. Fauja Singh, (Ed.), *Introduction to Who's Who of the Panjab Freedom Fighters*, p-xxxviii. See for a detailed account of the Praja Mandal Movement Dr. Ramesh Walia's doctoral thesis published under the title of the *Praja Mandal Movement in Patiala and East Panjab States Union*, Punjabi University Patiala, 1972.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Chronology of Important Events

12 October 1920	Golden Temple and the Akal Takhat come under Akali Control.
16 November 1920	S.G.P.C. comes into existence.
19 November 1920	Gurdwara Panja Sahib (Hasan Abdal) comes under Akali control.
14 December 1920	Shromani Akali Dal established.
20 January 1921	Durbar Sahib Tarn Taran comes under Akali control.
20 February 1921	Bhai Lachman Singh's Jatha reaches Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana. Tragedy of Nankana.
21 February 1921	Janam Asthan and other Gurdwaras at Nankana come under Panthic control.
1 March 1921	Maulana Shaukat Ali and other nationalist leaders attend the Shahidi Diwan at Nankana.
3 March 1921	Mahatma Gandhi addresses a Shahidi Diwan at Nankana and calls upon the Sikhs to adopt non-cooperation.
21 March 1921	Babbar Akali Movement begins.
5 April 1921	First Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill introduced in the Panjab Legislative Council.
11 May 1921	Akali leadership passes a formal resolution in favour of non-cooperation.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

29 October 1921	Keys of the Toshakhana of Golden Temple, Amritsar taken away by the Government.
11 November 1921	Protest meetings against the official action in taking over the keys.
26 November 1921	Arrests of the Akali leaders over the issue of the Keys.
17 January 1922	Government unconditionally releases the Akali leaders and others arrested in connection with the Keys agitation.
18 January 1922	A Gazetted Officer delivers the Keys to Baba Kharak Singh at a specially arranged Diwan at Akal Takhat, Amritsar.
9 August 1922	Arrest of the Akalis at Guru-ka-Bagh.
22 August 1922	Guru-ka-Bagh morcha begins.
10 September 1922	Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and other national leaders address the Akali Diwan at Amritsar.
12 September 1922	Rev. C.F. Andrews visits Guru-ka-Bagh.
13 September 1922	Panjab Governor, Sir Edward Maclagan, and other officials visit Guru-ka-Bagh.
7 November 1922	Second Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill introduced in the Panjab Legislative Council.
25 November 1922	Military pensioners' Jatha arrested at Guru-ka-Bagh.
23 April 1923	Unconditional release of the Akalis arrested in connection with the Guru-ka-Bagh morcha.
9 July 1923	Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha forced to abdicate his throne.
4 August 1923	S.G.P.C. general body decides to take up the Nabha issue.
27 August 1923	Arrest of the Akalis at Jaito.
25 September 1923	Jawaharlal Nehru, A.T. Gidwani and K. Santhanam arrested at Nabha.
29 September 1923	Jaito morcha begins.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

12 October 1923	Panjab Government passes an order declaring the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Shromani Akali Dal and various Jathas affiliated to them as 'unlawful associations.'
31 December 1923	Indian National Congress passes formal resolution supporting the Akali agitation at Nabha at its annual session at Cocanada.
21 February 1924	Firing at the Shahidi Jatha at Jaito.
11 April 1924	Birdwood Committee announced by the Government.
2 June 1924	Birdwood Committee announces its failure.
28 February 1925	Six Babbar Akalis sentenced to death.
7 July 1926	Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill passed by the Panjab Legislative Council.
28 July 1925	Gurdwara Bill gets the approval of the Governor-General.
6 August 1925	Completion of 101 Akhand Paths at Jaito and termination of the Akali Movement.
	Sardar Teja Singh Samundri dies in jail.
1 November 1925	Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act enforced.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Glossary of Punjabi Words

Akali	immortal, deathless
Ardas	the Sikh prayer
Buddha Dal	band of the old Nihangs
Chela	disciple, follower
Chaudhri	chief, headman
Dera	abode of a group or sect
Dharamsal	earlier name used for a Gurdwara
Diwan	congregation, religious-gathering
Durbar	seat of authority
Feringhee	foreigner (here used for Englishmen)
Gaddi	hereditary seat of authority or priesthood
Gurdwara	Sikh temple, also called Dharamsal
Gurmatta	decision taken by Sikh congregations
Granth	holy book of the Sikhs
Granthi	Sikh priest
Hukamnamah	directive from a Guru or the holy seats of Sikh authority
Jagir	land-grant
Jatha	band of devotees
Jathedar	leader or commander of the Jatha

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Jholi Chuk	toady, sycophant (here used for supporters of British imperialism)
Kar Sewa	cleansing of the holy tank
Kirtan	singing of the sacred hymns
Karah prasad	sacred sweetened food (pudding)
Langar	free community kitchen
Mahant	hereditary head of a religious shrine or trust
Morcha	literally entrenchment (here it means direct confrontation with the Mahants/British Government)
Panth	Sikh community as a whole
Sarbrah	manager or custodian of the Gurdwara
Saropa	robe of honour
Shahid	martyr

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

List of Abbreviations

B.M.	British Museum (Oriental Collection). London
B.(N) L.	British (Newspaper) Library, Colindale, London
B.S.T.L.	Bhai Takhat Singh Library, Ferozpur
C.K.D.	Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar
C.L.A.	Central Legislative Assembly
C. and M.G.	*The Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore)
C.P.L.	Central Public Library. Patiala
C.S.L.	Central Sikh League
F.P.	Foreign-Political files of the Government of India
H.P.	Home-Political files of the Government of India
I.L.R.	Indian Law Reports
I.N.C.	Indian National Congress
I.O.L.	India Office Library. London
K.C.I.E.	Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire
K.C.L.	Khalsa College (Sikh History Research Department) Library, Amritsar
L.A.D.	Legislative Assembly Debates
M.L.C.	Member of the Legislative Council (Panjab)
M.S.V.	Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid Collection in the Punjabi University Library, Patiala
N.A.I.	National Archives of India, New Delhi
N.M.M.L.	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

P.H.C.Pr.	Panjab History Conference Proceedings
P.L.C.Pr.	Panjab Legislative Council Proceedings
P.P.A.	Panjab Press Abstracts (from the Native Press Abstracts)
P.S.A.	Panjab State Archives, Patiala
Q.R.	*The Quarterly Registers* (M.N.Mitra (ed.)
S.A.D.	Shromani Akali Dal
S.E.C.	Sikh Educational Conference
S.G.P.C.	Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
S.O.A.S.	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix I

Copy of Letter from C.M, King, Commissioner, Lahore Division, to Baba Kartar Singh Bedi*

With reference to our conversation of 18 December about the claim of Mahants to peaceful possession of shrines in which they hold established rights I write to say that any person who attempts to eject forcibly any Mahant or other person holding rights in a shrine is liable to punishment under the criminal law. The Mahant may, if he has reasonable cause to suppose that he will be forcibly removed from his shrine, apply to the District Magistrate for protection provided he pays the cost for such protection. He may also, if he wishes, complain under Section 107, Criminal Procedure Code, and ask for security to be taken from persons likely to use force to him. If in spite of precautions he is ejected from his shrine he can sue for recovery of his rights and also bring criminal proceedings.

(*Undated letter written on or about 18 December 1920, quoted in File No. 179/II/1922, Home-Poll, National Archives of India, New Delhi, also published in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 1 March 1921.)

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix II

Order*

The large bands of Akalis collected at Guru-ka-Bagh, Tehsil Ajnala, are illegal assemblies. They are being supported by provisions sent to Guru-ka-Bagh from surrounding villages and from Amritsar city in carts and *ekkas*. Subscriptions are being collected in Amritsar city and provisions are being purchased and sent out to Guru-ka-Bagh. The consigners and carriers of such supplies are engaged in the commission of a cognizable offence under Section 143/109, Indian Penal Code, i.e., the abetment of an illegal assembly. The commission of this offence must be prevented under Section 149, Criminal Procedure Code. I, therefore, direct the police officers of the pickets at the Ranewala and the Chinnawala bridges on the Lahore branch of the Upper Bari Doab Canal to prevent the transmission of such supplies to the illegal assemblies at Guru-ka-Bagh. Carts, other conveyances and animals carrying such supplies as appear to be intended for the illegal assemblies should be stopped and attendants interrogated. If there is good reason to believe that the supplies are intended for these assemblies the carriers should be directed to return them whence they came. If carriers refuse to do so, the supplies should be sent to me in Amritsar for orders.

Sd/- J.M. Dunnett,
District Magistrate

(*Quoted in *the Proceedings of the Panjab Legislative Council, Vol. IV, 1922, pp. 470-1*)

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix III

Home Department (Judicial)

12 October 1923

No. 23772. Whereas the Governor of Panjab in Council is of opinion that the Association known as the 'Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee' and all Jathas organised by or affiliated to this body interfere with the maintenance of law and order, and that they jointly and severally constitute a danger to the public peace;

Now, therefore, the Governor of the Panjab in Council, by virtue of the powers conferred upon him by Section 16 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, as amended by the Devolution Act, 1920, is pleased hereby to declare the said Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the said Jathas to be unlawful associations.

C.A.H. Townsend,
Officiating Chief Secretary
to the Government, Panjab

Order No. 23773 similarly declared the 'Akali Dal' and 'Shromani Akali Dal' as unlawful associations.

Copied from File No. 28, Nabha State Records (Chief Minister's Office) at the Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix IV

Guru-ka-Bagh: An Eyewitness Account
by C. F. Andrews*

I

In this communication to the Press, I shall confine myself to what I have seen with my own eyes since my arrival at Amritsar on the morning of 12 September 1922.

At 1 p.m. on that day I started for Guru-ka-Bagh and after leaving the main road proceeded along the bank of a canal. There were three tongas in all. When we had gone some distance along the bank of the canal, we saw two Sikhs in black turbans on the opposite bank waving their hands to us and pointing to the sky, where a great bird was circling in its flight towards Amritsar. Immediately all those who were in the tongas got down and eagerly pointed out the bird to me and told me that every day, as soon as the beating at Guru-ka-Bagh began, the golden hawk rose from the Guru's garden and took its flight to Amritsar to tell those who were serving at the Golden Temple what was taking place. They asked me if I had seen the bird, and I answered that I had seen in the distance the great bird which they had pointed out but I could not say whether it was a golden hawk or not. They said to me, 'That was the bird. It was the golden hawk. It has gone to tell at the Darbar Sahib about the sufferings of the people'. There was a light in their faces as they spoke to me with betokened joy. I was especially struck by the look of devotion in the face of a Sikh lady of middle age who accompanied us. I can only describe it by saying that she looked, in her quiet

* Culled from *The Tribune*, 19-20 September, 1920

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

devotion, like a picture of the 'Madonna'. The whole scene, the intense faith of my companions, the look of reverence in their faces, the solemn awe mingled with joy, moved me very deeply. It was the first event which really gave me the religious atmosphere of all that I was afterwards to experience in the later scenes. It put me in touch with the Akali reform movement in its spiritual aspects as perhaps nothing else could have done.

After leaving the bank of the canal we had to pass across open ground for a long distance which was covered with water in certain places. Our progress was naturally slow in the tongas. We met on the route a band of hundred Akalis in black turbans, who had marched that morning from Amritsar after having taken the vow at the Golden Temple that they would not commit one single act of violence, either by word or deed. I was to see, later on, how faithfully they kept that vow. On subsequent days I had opportunities of witnessing the scene at the Golden Temple itself as they came out with religious joy written on their faces and a tiny wreath of white flower placed on their black turbans which dedicated them to the sacrifice. I was able to see also, in the city, the crowds of spectators, Hindus, Musalmans, and those of every religion, welcoming and encouraging them, as they marched solemnly and joyfully forward calling upon the name of God as their protector and saviour. There, in the city, they were at the very beginning of their pilgrimage. Mile after mile of mud-stained, water-logged road lay before them. When I saw them, on this first day of my visit, as they drew near to the end of their march, they were bespattered with mud and dirt and perspiration was streaming from them, but their garlands of white flowers were stiff encircling their black turbans, they were still uttering with triumphant voices their prayer to God for protection, and the light of religion was still bright upon their faces. There were some who were young lads among them, and a very few old men with grey beards who had insisted on being taken and would not be denied, but the great majority were of military age and it was easy to guess that out of these stalwart bearded men there had been many who had served in the army. I had an opportunity later of getting accurate statistics and it would appear that at least one in three of the Sikhs in these Akali Jathas (as they are called) had been a soldier and had served during the Great War.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

We got down from the tongas and went along with them for some distance. I was dressed in my English dress, with a sun helmet on my head, but even before they knew my name they returned my greeting without the slightest trace of bitterness in their faces. There was a halt to drink water and they got to know who I was and came forward. Then one who was serving water with a brass vessel came to me and offered the water to me also to drink. I put my hand forward to receive it, but he said to me, 'Please take the vessel itself' and I took it in my hands and drank from it. The act had a strongly religious aspect to me. It was as if I was sharing in a sacrament of consecration before the suffering was to begin.

At any place where water could be received along the road there were villagers, both men and women, who waited eagerly each day to fulfill this small act of service by giving water to the Akali Jathas. Again, I noticed the extraordinary devotion of the women. Their faces were full of motherly tenderness towards those who were going forward, in the name of their religion, to receive suffering without retaliation.

After very great difficulty and many halts at impassable places we reached Guru-ka-Bagh at last. The first sight that met our gaze was that of eight motor lorries, such as usually carry passengers for hire which were now being used as a substitute for ambulance wagons. When I looked at them, I could picture vividly the acute suffering to those who would be carried in them for more than fourteen miles to the base hospital in the city. Here and there the motors would almost certainly get stuck in the deep mud. The jolting in other places would be difficult to bear even for a man who was quite well. What must it have been to men who were suffering from many contusions and wounds?

There was one act of humanity which might at once have been thought of on the part of the officials, but no one among them seemed to have noticed it or suggested it. The public road along the canal was almost worse, from the point of view of jolting, than the open track beyond. But on the other side of the canal was a private road, kept for officials, along which the motor lorries with the wounded persons might have passed smoothly and quickly. It would have been an inexpressible relief to them on that terrible journey back from Guru-ka-Bagh, if the lorries had been allowed

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

to use it. But the subordinate Government officials who were approached time after time by the doctors and attendants refused altogether to allow them. I am quite certain that if the higher officials had been approached, they would not have refused. But one of the greatest hardships in India at the present time is the tension which exists on both sides, the open gulf which grows day by day wider and wider, the almost complete distrust with which Indians have learned, by bitter experience, to regard the official world.

II

When I reached the Gurdwara itself, I was struck at once by the absence of excitement such as I had expected to find among so great a crowd of people. Close to the entrance there was a reader of the Scriptures, who was holding a very large congregation of worshippers silent as they were seated on the ground before him. In another quarter there were attendants who were preparing the simple evening meal for the Gurdwara guests by grinding the flour between two large stones. There was no sign that the actual beating had just begun and that the sufferers had already endured the shower of blows. But when I asked one of the passers-by, he told me that the beating was now taking place. On hearing this news I at once went forward. There were some hundreds present seated on an open piece of ground watching what was going on in front, their faces strained with agony. I watched their faces first of all, before I turned to the corner of a building and reached a spot where I could see the beating itself. There was not a cry raised from the spectators but the lips of very many of them were moving in prayer. It was clear that they had been taught to repeat the name of God and to call on God for deliverance. I can only describe the silence and the worship and the pain upon the faces of these people, who were seated in prayer, as reminding me of the shadow of the Cross. What was happening to them was truly, in some dim way, a crucifixion. The Akalis were undergoing their baptism of fire, and they cried to God for help out of the depth of their agony of spirit.

Up till now I had not seen the suffering itself except as it was reflected in the faces of the spectators. But when I passed beyond a projecting wall and stood face to face with the ultimate moral contest I could understand the strained looks and the lips

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

that silently prayed. It was a sight which I never wish to see again, a sight incredible to an Englishman. There were four Akali Sikhs with black turbans facing a band of about a dozen policemen, including two English officers. They had walked slowly up to the line of the police just before I had arrived and they were standing silently in front of them at about a yard's distance. They were perfectly still and did not move further forward. Their hands were placed together in prayer and it was clear that they were praying. Then, without the slightest provocation on their part, an Englishman lunged forward the head of his lathi which was bound with brass. He lunged it forward in such a way that his fist which held the staff struck the Akali Sikh, who was praying, just at the collar bone with great force. It looked the most cowardly blow as I saw it struck and I had the greatest difficulty in keeping myself under control. But beforehand I had determined that I must, on no account, interfere by word or deed, but simply watch; for the vow, which had been taken by the sufferers, must be sacred to me also. Therefore passive silence on my part was imperative, but it is difficult to describe to those who have not seen the sight with their own eyes how difficult such a passive attitude was.

The blow which I saw was sufficient to fell the Akali Sikh and send him to the ground. He rolled over, and slowly got up once more, and faced the same punishment over again. Time after time one of the four who had gone forward was laid prostrate by repeated blows, now from the English officer and now from the police who were under his control. The others were knocked out more quickly. On this and on subsequent occasions the police committed certain acts which were brutal in the extreme. I saw with my own eyes one of these police kick in the stomach a Sikh who stood helplessly before him. It was a blow so foul that I could hardly restrain myself from crying out loud and rushing forward. But later on I was to see another act which was, if anything, even fouler still. For when one of the Akali Sikhs had been hurled to the ground and was lying prostrate, a police sepoy stamped with his foot upon him, using his full weight; the foot struck the prostrate man between the neck and the shoulder. A third blow, almost equally foul, was struck at an Akali when he was standing at the side of his fallen companion. This blow hurled him across the body of the fallen man who was unconscious at the very time when he was being taken up by two ambulance

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

workers. The intention of such a blow was so brutally insolent, that I watched for the Englishman in command, in this case as also in other cases, to rebuke the police sepoy who did the deed, but as far as I could see he did nothing to check or to rebuke his men. I told all these things that I had seen to the Governor and every officer whom I met the next day.

The brutality and inhumanity of the whole scene was indescribably increased by the fact that the men who were hit were praying to God and had already taken a vow that they would remain silent and peaceful in word and deed. The Akali Sikhs who had taken this vow, both at the Golden Temple before starting and also at the shrine of Guru-ka-Bagh, were, as I have already stated, largely from the army. They had served in many campaigns in Flanders, in France, in Mesopotamia and in East Africa. Some of them at the risk of their own safety may have saved the lives of Englishmen who had been wounded. Now they were felled to the ground at the hand of English officials serving in the same Government which they themselves had served. They were obliged to bear the brunt of blows, each one of which was an insult and humiliation, but each blow was turned into a triumph by the spirit with which it was endured.

It was a strangely new experience to these men, to receive blows dealt against them with such of the force as to fell them to the ground, and yet never to utter a word or strike a blow in return. The vow they had made to God was kept to the letter. I saw no act, no look, of defiance. It was a true martyrdom for them as they went forward, a true act of faith, a true deed of devotion to God. They remembered their Gurus how they had suffered, and they rejoined to add their own sufferings to the treasury of their wonderful faith. The onlookers too, who were Sikhs, were praying with them and praying for them, and the inspiration of their noble religion, with its joy in suffering innocently borne, could alone keep them from rushing forward to retaliate for the wrong which they felt was being done.

There has been something far greater in this event than a mere dispute about land and property. It has gone far beyond the technical questions of legal possession or distraint. A new heroism, learned through suffering, has arisen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world. This fact, in

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

the ultimate issue, is independent of the mere legal question of trespass decided for or against the Akali Sikhs. They believe intensely that their right to cut wood in the garden of the Guru was an immemorial religious right, and this faith of theirs is surely to be counted for righteousness, whatever a defective and obsolete law may determine or fail to determine concerning legality.

One thing I have not mentioned which was significant of all that I have written concerning the spirit of the suffering endured. It was very rarely that I witnessed any Akali Sikh, who went forward to suffer, flinch from a blow when it was struck. Apart from the instinctive and involuntary reaction of the muscles that has the appearance of a slight shrinking back, there was nothing, so far as I can remember, that could be called a deliberate avoidance of the blows struck. The blows were received one by one without resistance and without a sign of fear.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix V

Draft Statement of Jawaharlal Nehru written from the Central Jail, Nabha.

I do not desire to defend myself in this proceeding. which has been started against me or in any other proceeding which the present administration of Nabha may take against me. I write this statement to inform the Court of the facts as I know them and to correct some incorrect statements that have been made. I further wish to make clear the object of my visit to Nabha.

I have had every courtesy from this Court and I have no grievance against it. Indeed there is little room for any grievance or complaint where the Court has merely acted as a post office to convey the orders of some one else who has kept in the background. When at Jaito I read in the order served on me that a certain Mr. J.Wilson Johnston purported to be the present 'Administrator of Nabha State'. I had never heard of this gentleman before. I have read in the papers that the administration of Nabha has been changed. the Maharaja made to retire and some other arrangement had been made. But I am not aware under what law this change in the Administration had been made and an 'Administrator' appointed. Nor do I know that any mention is made in the Criminal Procedure Code of Indian Penal Code of the 'Administrator' of his right to issue orders under Section 144 Criminal Penal Code. Ever since my arrival at Jaito however I have been repeatedly confronted with the name of designation of present 'Administrator' of Nabha. To almost every question that I have asked the reply has been given that the 'Administrator' will decide. Even the most trivial matters which have been provided for in the jail manual have been referred

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

to him. Under-trial prisoners are supposed to possess certain rights to consult their relatives and advisers, to write letters through the jail authorities, etc. I have been prevented from seeing or communicating with any person outside and have been informed that such is the order of the 'Administrator'. The Court informed me on one occasion that we would be allowed to write letters home if the jail rules so allowed but immediately after came the orders of the 'Administrator' that this would not be permitted. Even a request for a change of clothes had to be referred to the 'Administrator' and it took two full days before I was allowed to take out a change from my luggage. Yesterday morning I presented an application to the Court insisting on my right. as an under-trial prisoner. to interview my relatives and advisers and also to write letters. A second sitting of the court took place in the afternoon and I was informed that my application had been sent to the 'Administrator' who had passed certain orders on it. Thus on the admission of the Court, it is the 'Administrator' who takes upon himself the business of deciding on our applications. and the Court has merely the pleasant function of transmitting his orders to us. The whole trial becomes a farce if the Court is relegated to this position. We are not being tried in a Court of law but in a feeble parody of it with the 'Administrator' sitting in the background somewhere behind the *purdah*, issuing orders to his marionettes who have to carry out his bidding without thought or reason. Indeed the 'Administrator' is like Pooh-Bah of Mikado, the Lord High Everything. and interferes in every matter. judicial or executive.

I am informed that my father was in Nabha yesterday. He had come all the way from Allahabad to see me and advise me but we have not been permitted to see each other. I merely point this out as an instance of the ways in which the Nabha State is administered at present.

My companions and I had read in the papers about strange doings in Nabha and Jaito. We decided to come here for a couple of days to see what was happening. We also wanted to see in what manner the Akali Sikhs were meeting the situation. We therefore proceeded to Muktsar and from there we went by road on horseback and bullock cart towards Jaito. On our way we passed Akali Jathas. About two or three miles from Jaito we caught up with a Jatha and discarding our bullock cart and horse we decided to walk

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

along in their wake. Thus we arrived at Jaito. When the Jatha was stopped at Jaito we stood by to see what was happening. We were asked by the police or military who we were and what our object was. We told them that we were obviously not Akalis or members of the Jatha. We had come along with them to note developments. We continued watching from the roadside. The statement of the Superintendent of Police of Jaito to the effect that we were forcibly kept back from proceeding further—*hath phaila ke roke gai*—is, like many other statements made by the worthy member of the police force in this and in another proceeding, a lie. There was no object in our trying to force our way. We had come to watch and we stood aside to see the Jatha and the police. Just then the Superintendent of Police came and showed me an order under Section 144 signed by Mr. Wilson Johnston as 'Administrator' of Nabha State. I accepted the service of this order and informed the Superintendent that I did not intend leaving Nabha territory. My companions and I then went to a small building nearby—I think it is called the *Dharamshala*—and sat down in the verandah as the sun was hot outside. A little later the Superintendent of Police returned with some others, one of whom we were told was the District Magistrate of the place. We were formally arrested under Section 188. My companions pointed out that no order had been served on them so far but this difficulty was got over by the District Magistrate pronouncing an oral order under Section 144 Criminal Penal Code. As my friends are dealing with their part of the case I need not say more about it. I may mention however that the statement of the Superintendent of Police of Jaito that my companions refused to sign the order under Section 144 is an untruth. They were never asked to sign. I am sure that they would have willingly signed if they had been asked to do so. These are the facts leading up to our arrest. I do not desire to take advantage of any technicalities but I wish to make it clear that the order under Section 144 was not a bona fide order. There was not the slightest danger of our visit resulting in a breach of public tranquillity and I make bold to say that the 'Administrator' knew this. Indeed, our entry into Nabha territory, our stay there for some hours and eventually our arrest, did not as a matter of fact result in any disturbance of the public peace. The only peace that it probably disturbed was the peace of mind of the 'Administrator'. The issuing of this order under Section 144

is a prostitution of legal process. It was not meant to serve an object contemplated by the law but merely to prevent outsiders from entering Nabha State. The State has prevented outsiders from entering Nabha State. The State has apparently become sacred territory where none may enter who is not prepared to bow down to the 'Administrator'.

The order refers to our membership of the All India Congress Committee and gives as a reason for the fear of a breach of peace the recent resolutions of the Congress Committee. I take it that the 'Administrator' is not well up in what is happening outside Nabha State and in his ignorance has referred to the resolutions of the Special Congress held at Delhi as resolutions of the 'Congress Committee'. I have thus been arrested in my capacity as a member of the All India Congress Committee. The 'Administrator's' references to the Congress and the Committee are unbecoming and insulting and as a humble member of that national body I cannot tolerate any such impertinence.

I have stated above that my object in visiting Nabha State was to find out the truth of various allegations made against the present administration. That object has been largely served and I have to thank the 'Administrator' and his underlings for the speedy discovery to the true state of affairs in Nabha. Our arrest soon after we entered Nabha territory on a peaceful mission of enquiry, our subequent treatment. our seclusion from all outside contact, the refusal to permit us to see our advisers and relatives, the refusal to allow us to send any letters or other communications even as under-trial prisoners and lastly the farce of a trial which we are undergoing, are eloquent testimony of the present state of Nabha. I have no personal knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the State during Maharaja Ripudaman Singh's rule but I can say from personal knowledge that the present conditions are scandalous and shocking. No man who values his honour and refuses to bow down to the 'Administrator' is apparently safe. High officials of the old Nabha administration are at present in the jail with us. their crime being apparently their loyalty to their old chief. They are not tried, nor is a charge brought against them. The old system of letters de cachet evidently finds favour with the 'Administrator' of Nabha State. Others who have been tried are little better off. Their trials are farcical and monstrous sentences are awarded to them. Trials

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

are practically conducted in camera and outsiders are seldom if ever admitted. Even in our case when there was some inducement to the authorities to observe the forms of law, people were seldom allowed to enter. They were stopped outside in spite of my drawing the attention of the Court repeatedly to this fact. To all our protests the answer is given: such is the way in Nabha State. It has not taken us long to discover the way in Nabha State under the present 'Administrator'.

We have also come across in jail respected members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhk Committee treated as ordinary felons although they have not even been sentenced yet. Many Akalis in the jail have been on hunger strike for some time.

I should also like to state here as an instance of Nabha justice certain proceedings taken against us yesterday. Late in the evening, after dusk and after we had already had two sittings of this court, we were taken to a room and made to sit there. There were others present there including our old acquaintance the Superintendent of Police of Jaito and the Court Inspector. With us was placed another prisoner in chains. Suddenly the Court Inspector started questioning the Superintendent of Police. I enquired what was happening and was told that a fresh proceeding had started against us. We were being charged under Section 145 I.P.C. for being members or leaders of an unlawful assembly. No notice or warrant or any kind of information had been given to us of this proceeding. I told the Court that this was the most extraordinary procedure I had heard of outside a stage and it was utterly opposed to all law and procedure. The proceedings however continued, the farce has gone through. The Superintendent of Police of Jaito excelled himself and drew upon his imagination to remarkable extent. He improved upon his old story as stated in this Court and gave utterance to more lies in a few minutes than I can remember. We were charged with refusal to disperse after we had been ordered to do so. I was not aware till I came to Nabha under arrest that any Jatha had been declared to be an unlawful assembly. Nor was any one, in my hearing, asked to disperse. The Jatha was asked to go back and not to proceed further. They refused to turn back and sat down on the road. My companions and I were not asked to go away or disperse. I was shown the order under Section 144 which I refused to obey and then, as I have stated above, we

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

went and sat in the verandah of the Dharmshala. There we were arrested. It is somewhat difficult for me to understand how persons under arrest can disperse.

Our co-accused in this proceeding was one Darbara Singh. He was stated by the imaginative Superintendent of Police to have been the leader of the Jatha and to have continuously refused to disperse his Jatha. This is an absolute lie and I can speak from personal knowledge of it. Darbara Singh was never with the Jatha. Every member of the Jatha wore a black turban. Darbara Singh had a saffron-coloured turban on and so could easily be recognised. Darbara Singh met my companions and me when we were riding quite separated from the Jatha some miles from Jaito. As we did not know the way he was good enough to guide us. When we started walking, Darbara Singh took my pony and marched with my luggage and with my luggage he went to Jaito station. He was nowhere near the Jatha when the police or the military stopped it, nor was he arrested there. He was probably arrested at the station where he happened to be with my luggage. The whole story of Darbara Singh as stated by the Jaito Superintendent of Police is a lie and is clearly an afterthought.

This is the justice of the present administration of Nabha. The Jatha which came to jail has, I believe, been released but Darbara Singh, a man who had nothing to do with it, has been run in for leading that Jatha. Darbara Singh has suffered for his country for many years. He has suffered internment in jail and has been shot at by British troops ever since he came back on the *Komagata Maru*. I am proud to be put in the same dock with him and trust that I shall exhibit the same courage as he has shown on numerous occasions.

Various proceedings are being taken against us in Nabha Courts. I have pointed out how utterly illegal and groundless they are. My friend and co-accused Mr. Santhanam has dealt with the law and I do not desire to say anything more about it. We do not desire to take advantage of any technical or legal plea. I merely point them out to show how unscrupulous the proceedings are. It is my business to combat the British Government in India and all its works and I shall continue to do so till we have achieved success. The straight thing to do is to run me in for sedition and I shall gladly and joyfully admit the charge. But the ways of the Nabha administration are not straight. They are crooked.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

I rejoice that I am being tried for a cause which the Sikhs have made their own. I was in jail when the Guru-ka-Bagh struggle was gallantly fought and won by the Sikhs. I marvelled at the courage and sacrifice of the Akalis and wished that I could be given an opportunity of showing my deep admiration of them by some form of service. That opportunity has now been given to me and I earnestly hope that I shall prove worthy of their high tradition and fine courage. *Sat Sri Akal.**

Jawaharlal Nehru
25 September 1923
10:30 a.m.

Central Jail
Nabha

*This is a copy of the first hand-written draft statement in 'Papers relating to Nabha Trial' at the Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi (since published in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* edited by S. Gopal). Since the original draft contained a few paragraphs which were highly critical of the British Administrator of Nabha and the administrative and judicial machinery in the State and greatly appreciated the Akali Sikhs and their struggle, his father, Motilal Nehru, who visited Nabha in connection with his court defence, 'replaced these paragraphs with a closely argued statement written with the cold pen of a lawyer'. It was the changed version which was actually read by Jawaharlal Nehru at the Nabha Court on 28 September 1923. For lack of space it is not possible to append the revised version for which the reader is advised to see Ganda Singh (ed.), *Panjab Past and Present*, October 1970, pp. 425-31. Also see S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol: I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix VI

Copy of Letter dated 9 April 1924 from S. Zimand, Representative of the *New York Times*, to Mahatma Gandhi about the firing on the Shahidi Jatha at Jaito

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

On the eve of my departure from India I want to tell you again how fortunate I consider myself to have had the opportunity of visiting your land. I want to use this opportunity of thanking through you, your innumerable friends and countrymen for their gracious hospitality, unfailing courtesy and generous help they have rendered to me during my whole stay in India.

At my interview with you at Juhu, Bombay, you asked me a few questions about the occurrences at Jaito on 21 February of this year. I feel that in my anxiety to find out your views on the different political and social problems, I monopolised the long time which you kindly gave me and neglected to give a coherent description of what actually occured at Jaito. I shall therefore try to tell you now, as truthfully as I know, about the incident at Jaito. I am especially anxious to send you my version of the incident because my name has repeatedly been mentioned in this connection by the press.

On the morning of 20 February I arrived in Amritsar. According to my previous arrangements I was to leave on the morning of the next day for Peshawar. A few hours after my arrival I decided to proceed to Jaito. I started from Amritsar by motor with Mr. Gidwani, Dr. Kitchlew and a Sikh gentleman whose name I cannot recall at present. We motored the whole day and after dusk we

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

reached Bargari village where the Jatha was encamped. It was in Faridkot State territory.

After the evening meal in a tent which was put at our disposal, I visited the different tents where the Jatha was resting. All was very peaceful and orderly. I went back to my tent and at about 10 p.m. I walked out again. I noticed that a religious service was being held and that about 2,000 villagers (from nearby places and also from Bargari village) were listening to the recitation of the Sikh scripture. I passed the night together with Mr. Gidwani and Dr. Kitchlew. These two gentlemen were with me all the time. They did not address the crowd and as I followed them step by step I can say that they held no conferences whatever with the Jatha. All three of us retired at the same time.

On the morning of 21 February we went out to see the village. I saw a number of policemen and officers near the camp. I went back to the place where the Jatha was encamped and looked very carefully over the whole body of men, Jatha and sangat assembled there. I had the opportunity of observing practically the entire Jatha and the crowds accompanying the Jatha. I did not see anyone carrying fire-arms or any other weapons.

The recitation of what the Sikhs call *Asa-di-var* was over a little after 2 a.m. No speeches were delivered. By 11 o'clock the Jatha and sangat took their meals at the nearby Gurdwara. About the same time I took another look around the open place where the Jatha was encamped and went into the interior of the village. Near the open space groups of good-humoured people were amusing themselves.

About twelve noon the Jatha started for Jaito. I suggested to Mr. Gidwani and Dr. Kitchlew that we might proceed in our motor ahead of the procession. First we walked for a mile and the car went ahead. On the way I noticed crowds of people waiting for the Jatha with refreshments and others were clearing the road from branches and leaves. We entered the motor again and drove for nearly two miles. I again asked that the car be stopped that I may again observe the Jatha in their marching order and also those who were accompanying the Jatha.

I would estimate the crowd following the Jatha at about 7000 men and women of all ages and children. Those following the Jatha and the people who were waiting for the arrival of the Jatha

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

were shouting 'Sat Sri Akal'. There was no element of disturbance anywhere.

As soon as the Jatha got near we got into the car again and drove ahead near the Nabha frontier. As yet none of us had entered the Nabha State. At the frontier there were a number of uniformed officers and one in plain clothes on horse back. One of them approached and asked us to stop the car. This request was immediately complied with. The officer handed over to Dr. Kitchlew a paper which Dr. Kitchlew read. It was an order from the Administrator for the Jatha. Dr. Kitchlew and Mr. Gidwani said that the paper was not meant for them because they did not belong to the Jatha. I stood up in the car and said, 'I am here merely as an observer'. The officer in plain clothes asked my name and gallopped towards Jaito. That was the last I saw of him. While there had been no direct order stopping any of us from entering, I said that I should await the answer of the authorities, thinking all the time that the officer who had gallopped towards Nabha would bring back some word.

At 1.50 p.m. the Jatha passed into the Nabha State. No official presented to them the paper from the Administrator which was handed over to Dr. Kitchlew. In fact, by this time, there was no official at the frontier. The Jatha moved closely. The crowds were shouting 'Sat Sri Akal'. The whole procession passed in front of me and again I saw no one carrying fire-arms or weapons of any kind. I saw the usual Sikh kirpan and about 500 in the crowd had sticks. That latter were of usual sort carried by farmers. We waited for some time on the Nabha frontier and then Mr. Gidwani sent a joint note to the Administrator asking him if we might proceed to Jaito. No answer came to this notice.

At 2.45 p.m. the first firing started. The firing was in regular volley and there were no desultory shots. This lasted for full two minutes, i.e., from 2.45 to 2.47 p.m. At 2.55 p.m. I heard the second firing. It sounded like the first. It lasted till 2.58 p.m. That was all the firing I heard. None after and none before.

A short time after the second firing a young chap brought the news that there were many deaths and casualties and said that no arrangements had been made to take care of the wounded. It was at this juncture that Dr. Kitchlew and Mr. Gidwani decided to motor to Jaito in order that they might take care of the wounded.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Up to this time Mr. Gidwani has been saying to me that he would not enter the Nabha territory without permission from the authorities. Only after the bad news came of the wounded being left uncared for, he felt that it was his duty to go to help and to make adequate arrangements. I am convinced that had it not been for the news which aroused his concern for the wounded people, Mr. Gidwani would not have entered the state. I did not enter Nabha territory because while there was yet no order stopping me from entering, I was waiting to hear what the authorities had to say.

At about 3.20 p.m. a mounted officer, who told me that his name was Sardar Fateh Singh of Faridkot accompanied by six or seven policemen approached me at the boundary line of the Nabha and Faridkot territory where I was waiting. Sardar Fateh Singh enquired my name and asked me 'whether I still intended to enter Jaito'. I replied I wanted to enter Jaito and waited to hear from the authorities.

He replied that I 'was ordered to leave the State territory at once'.

'But', said I, 'I have not entered Nabha territory at all'. 'You are asked', said he in reply, 'to leave both Faridkot and Nabha territories at once'.

I then told Mr. Fateh Singh that I was waiting for the car.

'That is just out', said he 'I did not want to let you with indefinitely because the car will not return.'

I was then led by the officer in the direction of the Jaito railway station. We had walked only a few steps when I sighted the motor in which I had come. I said that I preferred to go back by car. The officer assented to this and asked me to sign a paper saying that I was leaving the State territory at once. This I did.

I asked the Sardar if he would tell me who was responsible for the order. He gave me no direct reply to this question. 'But,', said he, 'if you want to explain your position you had better write a letter to Colonel Minchin, Agent of the Governor-General for the Panjab States.' I wrote the letter on the spot and handed it over to him.

Extract from the *Quarterly Registers*, March 1924, pp. 108-11.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix VII

List of the Editors, Printers and Publishers of Newspapers Punished for their Sympathy with the Akalis

Teja Singh of *Gargaj Akali* fined Rs. 5,000/-, editor of *Daler Akali*, Amritsar, fined Rs. 500/-, editor, publisher and printer of the *Kirpan Bahadur* sentenced for 1½ years and fined Rs.150/- each.

Jawala Singh, editor of the *Desh Sewak* fined Rs. 150/-

Gopal Singh and Hari Singh, authors and printers of the poster *'Central Sikh League da chautha salana jalsa'* sentenced to 2½ years' imprisonment and fine of Rs.200/- each.

Sunder Singh sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for his book *Taze Zakham*.

Editor, printers and publishers of the *Babbar Sher* all sentenced to 1½ years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100/- each.

Printer of *Onward*, sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 200/-.

Owners of the Khalsa Azad Agency prosecuted.

Rattan Singh Azad sentenced to five years' transportation for his book *Bhaghi Sikh ke Sarkar*.

Gurbachan Singh Akali, editor of the *Babbar Sher* sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fine of Rs. 100/-.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Tara Singh sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200/- for his book, *Naukarshahi da daka te Nabhe di Pukar*.

Proprietors of the following papers warned for their sympathy with the Akali movement: *The Tribune, Kesri, Bande Matram*.

Proprietors of the following publishing and printing houses warned: Sud Press Amritsar, Akali Press, Amritsar, Punjab Khalsa Press, Amritsar.

From the Native Press Abstracts, relating to Pb. (1920-25) at the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix VIII

List of Newspapers in the Panjab that Supported the Akali Movement

Name of the Paper	*Editor*	*Place of Publication*
	ENGLISH	
The Tribune	Kalinath Ray	Lahore
The Nation	Mohinder Singh	Lahore
The Onward	Swami Onkarnand	Lahore
The Liberal	-	Amritsar
	URDU	
The Akali	Sardul Singh	Amritsar
Bande Matram	Mela Ram Wafa	Lahore
Darpan	Mulk Raj	Lahore
Desh	Dina Nath	Lahore
Kesri	Lachhman Singh	Lahore
Milap	Khushal Chand	Lahore
Nusrat	F.M.Khurshaid	Lahore
Partap	Radha Kishan	Lahore
Zamindar	Ghulam Rasul	Lahore
Loyal Gzzette	Ram Singh	Lahore
Shaheed	Thakur Singh	Lahore

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Vakil	Abdul Karim	Amritsar
Gurdwara	Gurmukh Singh	Amritsar
Pendu	Sultan Mehmud	Amritsar
	GURMUKHI	
Akali te Pardesi	Mangal Singh	Amritsar
Ranjit	-	Amritsar
Ajit	-	Amritsar
Babbar Sher	Gurbachan Singh	Amritsar
Khalsa	Bagh Singh	Amritsar
Qaumi Dard	Kapur Singh	Amritsar
Desh Sewak	Jawala Singh	Amritsar
Khalsa Akhbar	-	Amritsar
Khalsa Samachar	-	Amritsar
Khalsa Advocate	Bhai Jodh Singh	Amritsar
Nirol Khalsa	-	Amritsar
	HINDI	
Akashvani	Lala Jagat Narain	Lahore

Since files of most of these papers were not preserved or could not be traced, I have quoted these papers from the Native Press Abstracts at the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Appendix IX

List of Newspapers in the Panjab that Opposed the Akali Movement

Name of the Paper	*Editor*	*Place of Publication*
	ENGLISH	
The Civil and Military Gazette	K.H.Hardy	Lahore
The Panjab Gazette	-	Lahore
The Panjab Chronicle	J.A.Gillan	Amritsar
	URDU	
Paisa Akhbar	Mehbub Alam	Lahore
Updeshak	Munshi Ram Sewak	Lahore
Khwaja	Khwaja Mohd. Ziaullah	Amritsar
	GURMUKHI	
Sant Samachar	Narankar Singh	Lahore
Satjug	-	Lahore
Dharamvir	-	Lahore

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Bibliography

Primary Sources

I. ***Archival Records***

Government of India Files, copies of the Panjab Government Files in the Home-Political, Home-General, Foreign-Political and Legislative Departments from 1920 to 1926 available at the National Archives of India, New Delhi:

122-IV/1920; 18/1922, 106-II/1922, 179-II/1922, 262/1922, 268/1922, 327-I/1922, 459-I/1922, 459-II/1922, 712/1922, 861/1922, 914-I/1922, 914-II/1922, 914/III/1922, 914-IV/ 1922, 944/1922, 949/1922,

25/1923, 71/1923, 90-V/1923, 112/1923, 112-II/1923, 134-II/1923, 134-III/1923, 148-II/1923, 148-IV/1923, 179/1923, 191/1923.

File I series I-VI, X and XI, 15/I/1924, 15-II/1924, 15-III/1924, 25/1924 (Serial Nos. 175-86), 66/1924 and 66, series I to IV/1924, 91/1924, 95/1924, 108/1924, 144/1924, 152/1924, 180/1924, 250/1924, 254/1924, 269/1924, 297/1924, 299/1924, 333/1924, 364/1924, 365/1924, 371-I & II/1924, 386/1924, 401/1924.

82/KW/1925, series I-IV/1925, 88/I/1925, 89/I/1925, 112/1925, 120-I/,120-II/1925, 120-III and IV, VI to VIII/1925, 158/1925, 229/1925, 395/1925, 27/1926, 28-IV/1926, 112-IV/1926, 235/1925, 245/1926.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Files from the Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, etc. containing proceedings of the various Akali Jatha's meetings, C.I.D. reports on the activities of the Akalis in the Sikh States, measures of the States against the Akalis, secret correspondence regarding the abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha, arrest of the Akalis and the Congress leaders, statements of Jawaharlal Nehru, A.T. Gidwani and K. Santhanam etc., reports from the Nazim of Phul about the Akali Diwan at Jaito, court proceedings against the Akalis, Registers containing details of the Akali jathas, etc., at the Panjab State Archives, Patiala (Offices of the Prime Minister, Patiala State and the Chief Minister, Nabha State).

II. ***Proceedings***

The Akali Conferences, Sikh Educational Conference, Indian National Congress (Gaya Session, December 1922, special Working Committee Session at Delhi, September 1923 and the Cocanada Session, December 1923), correspondence of the Akali Sahayak Bureau, reports on the work done by the Panjab Provincial Congress Committee during the years 1920-25, etc., at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

III. S.G.P.C. communiques at the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, copies of the resolutions and addresses of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.

IV. ***Private Papers of the British Officials***

At the India Office Library, London and/or with their families.

Reading Papers : Private Papers of Rufus Daniel Isaac, first Marquis of Reading, Governor-General and Viceroy of India, 1921-26, Mss Eur D. 701 and Mss Eur F. 118/123 I.O.L.

Lytton Papers : Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer Lytton, Second Earl of Lytton, Acting Governor-

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

General and Viceroy of India, April-August, 1925, Mss Eur F. 160 I.O.L.

Montague Papers: Edwin Samuel Montague, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, Mss Eur C-224, I.O.L.

Birdwood Papers: General-Officer-Commanding, Northern Command, Mss Eur F. 116, G. 57; D. 523/38 and E. 264/2-16 at the I.O.L., and also the diaries of General Birdwood at the National War Museum, London.

Hailey Papers: Sir W. Malcolm Hailey of Shahpur, Panjab, Member of the Governor-General's Council, Finance and Home Member and later Governor of the Panjab, 1924-1928, Files No. Mss Eur E. 220/5-D, 6-A, B, C, 7 A and B, 8 A and B, 35, 36 and 37 and 41-45, (roughly about 3,500 pages).

Dunnett Papers: Sir J.M. Dunnett, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar during the Akali struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh, diaries of his wife, some private and family letters, newspaper cuttings and old photographs of the Akalis in the collection of his daughter Mrs. J.B. Shrearer, Sussex, and his son Sir George Dunnett, London.

Emerson Papers: Sir H.W. Emerson, Assistant Commissioner and later Governor of the Panjab, mainly responsible for the drafting of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1925 along with Mr. F.H. Puckle.* Letters, newspapers cuttings, etc., in the collection of his son Mr. H.G. Emerson, London.

*In spite of my best efforts I could not get access to the Private Papers of Mr. F.H. Puckle who drafted the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1925 along with Mr. H. W. Emerson in the possession of Lady Puckle at Oxford, U.K., due to the indifferent health of the lady.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Curry Papers : Papers of Mr. J.C. Curry, Deputy Commissioner of Sheikhupura at the time of the tragedy of Nankana in 1921, reports about the Nankana tragedy and other police and C.I.D. reports.

V. *Private Papers of the Akali and National Leaders*

Tara Singh Papers : Private Papers of Master Tara Singh, an extremist Akali leader, President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C. for a long time. Some of the papers have since been published by his son Jaswant Singh under the title *Master Tara Singh: Jiwan, Sangharsh te Udesh.*

Nehru Papers : Private Papers of Jawaharlal Nehru, General Secretary of the Congress during the days of the Akali Movement, particularly the Miscellaneous and Prison Papers and the correspondence of the Akali Sahayak Bureau, Amritsar. Most of these papers have since been published by the Nehru Memorial Fund in the series *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* edited by S. Gopal.

Caveeshar Papers: Private Papers of Sardual Singh Caveeshar, an extremist and non-cooperator, in the collection of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

Majithia Papers : Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Revenue Member of the Panjab during the days of the Akali Movement, a moderate Sikh leader. Some letters, other correspondence in the N.M.M.L.

Jodh Singh Papers : Bhai Jodh Singh, a moderate Sikh leader, M.L.C. and later Principal of the Khalsa College, Amritsar and the Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University,

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Patiala, mainly responsible for the drafting of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1925 alongwith Tara Singh, M.L.C. Moga, some papers regarding the Bill and other letters in the personal collection of Dr. Ganda Singh, Patiala.

VI. *Personal/ Recorded Interviews*

1. Lord Mountbatten, London.
2. Sir Allen Campbell Johnson, London.
3. Sir Pendrel Moon, London.
4. Sir George Dunnett, London.
5. Mr. H.G. Emerson, London.
6. Bhai Jodh Singh, Model Town, Ludhiana.
7. Sardar Mangal Singh Akali, Ludhiana.
8. Sardar Sohan Singh Josh, New Delhi.
9. Giani Gurmukh singh Musafir, M.P., New Delhi,
10. (Maharani) Gurcharan Kaur of Nabha.

VII. *Published Proceedings*

Proceedings Of the Indian Legislative Assembly (1921-26). *Proceedings* of the Panjab Legislative Council (1919-26). *Confidential Memorandum on the S.G.P.C.* reprinted in the *Panjab Past and Present*, Ganda Singh (Ed.) October 1965, pp.252-310. *Akali Leader's Case* (1923-25) in 2 Vols. *Congress Enquiry Committee Report* regarding Guru-ka-Bagh. *Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act* (Act VIII of 1925). Nabha Affair (Private, Confidential), Allahabad, undated.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

VIII. ***Old Newspapers***

The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 1920-25, N.M.M.L.

The Tribune, Lahore, 1919-26, N.M.M.L.

The Civil and Military Gazette Lahore, 1919-26, British (Newspaper) Library, Colindale, London.

The New York Times, London. 1923-24, B.N.L.

The Times, London. 1922-25. B.N.L.

The Khalsa Samachar and the *Khalsa Advocate* (Microfilms). N.M.M.L.

The *Akali* and the *Akali-te-Pardesi,* some available issues at the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar.

The Native Press Abstracts (relating to Panjab). 1919-26. (English translation of most of the important news-items regarding the Akali Movement from different vernacular papers of the Panjab) at the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Newspaper cuttings from various Indian and foreign newspapers such as *Observer, New India, Daily Gazette, Independent,* The *Englishman*. The *Indian Mirror,* The *Sind Observer* The *Leader*, The *Daily Mail,* The *Daily Telegraph,* The *Pioneer* and The *Nation,* etc., in the Private Papers of Malcolm Hailey, Files No. Mss Eur E. 220/35, 36, 37, Vols. I, II and III at I.O.L., London.

Voice of India, Selected Opinions (mainly pro-British) from various newspapers regarding the settlement of the Sikh question. Published by the Director of Information Bureau, Simla. 1926.

Files of Newspaper cuttings from various papers in the Sikh States in the Panjab State Archives Basta No. 182. (Patiala State Records, Prime Minister's Office).

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

IX. *Journals*

Proceedings of the Panjab History Conference, Patiala.

The Panjab Past and Present, a bi-annual journal of the Punjabi University, Patiala, Dr. Ganda Singh (ed.).

The *Quarterly Registers* M.N. Mitra (ed.), Calcutta.

The *Contemporary Review,* Vol. 124, September 1923, John Maynard's article entitled 'The Sikh Problem in the Panjab'.

Fortnightly Review, September 1923, Komma's article 'The Sikh Situation in the Panjab'.

Journal of Asiatic Studies, May 1974, Barbara Ramusack's article 'The Incident at Nabha'.

X. *Ph. D. Thesis/M.A. Dissertations*

Aurora, Gurdip Singh, *Indian Workers in England: A Sociological and Historical Survey,* University of London, 1960.

Bhagat Singh, *Development of Sikh Policy,* Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972.

Dhillon, Gurdarshan Singh, *Character and Impact of the Singh Sabha Movement,* Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973.

Gulati, Kailash Chander, *The Origin and Growth of the Akali Party upto 1947,* Panjab University, Chandigarh (since published under the title *Akalis: Past and Present,* Ashajanak Publications, Delhi, 1974).

Gursharan Singh, *Akali Movement in the Phoolkian States up to 1938,* M.A. dissertation of the Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.

Jaspal Kaur, *Tenants Movement in the Patiala State,* M.A. dissertation of the Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Rekhi. Joginder Singh. *The Parja Mandal Movement,* M.A. dissertation of the Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968.

Sharma, Haridev, *Non-Co-operation Movement,* 1919-22, Ph.D. thesis of the University of Delhi.

XI. *Proscribed Literature on the Akali Movement*

National Archives of India, New Delhi and the Oriental Collection of the British Museum, London.

Akali, Ganga Singh, *Kalgidhar da Jahur,* N.A.I.

Akali, Saheb Singh, *Shahidi Saka Jaito,* N.A.I.

Azad, Avtar Singh, *Kaidi Veer,* Panjab Khalsa Press, Amritsar, I.O.L., London.

Azad, Bhag Singh, *Shantmai Gola,* N.A.I.

Azad, Rattan Singh, *Azad di Garj,* N.A.I.

Azad, Rattan Singh, *Bagghi Sikh ke Sarkar,* B.M.

Bhag Singh, *Sakhti da Har,* Coronation Press, Amritsar, 1924, I.O.L.

Bhag Singh Nidharak, *Azadi di Khich,* Punjab Khalsa Press Amritsar, 1924, I.O.L.

Bhola Singh, *Shahidi Parvane,* N.A.I.

Dalip Singh, *Parsang Rattan Singh Babbar Akali,* Amritsar, B.M.

Darshan Singh, *Bijli di Karak,* Khalsa Azad Agency, Amritsar, 1922, B.M.

Feroz-ud-Din Sharif, *Dukhan de Kirne,* Panjab Khalsa Press, Amritsar.n.d., B.M.

Gupat Hukamnama, B.M.

Gurbux Singh, *Shahidi di Khich,* N.A.I.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Gurdit Singh. *Biography of Baba Gurdit Singh,* N.A.I.

Gurdial Singh *Udaroo Goorj,* N.A.I.

Gurmukh Singh (ed.) *A Brief Account of Military Sikh's Struggle for Religious Freedom*. Hyderabad Sind, 1921. B.M.

Gurmukh Singh, Gyani, *Jiwan Birtant Master Mota Singh ji,* Jullundur. 1923. B.M.

Harnam Singh Mastpanchi. *Angrezan ne Nabha kikun Lita,* Panjab Khalsa Press. Amritsar, N.A.I.

— — *Zulum de Ban,* Sud Printing Press. Amritsar, 1924, I.O.L.

Mishar. Shiv Narayan. *Akali Darshan* (Hindi). undated I.O.L.

Nihal Singh, Bhai, *Akali Bhabak,* Khalsa Agency, Amritsar, I.O.L.

Ranjit Singh Tajwar. *Hirde Vedhak bad Nasib Bharat de Bachian te hoe Zulaman da asli photo*, Gurdwara Press, Amritsar. 1922. I.O.L.

— — *Kale te Gore da Sawal Jawab,* Akali Press Amritsar, undated. B.M.

S.G.P.C., *Jaito Killing* (later word 'Affair' pasted over the word 'Killing' to minimise the chances of the booklet being proscribed). S.G.P.C.. Amritsar. 1924. P.S.A.

— — *Jaito de Atyachar*, Khalsa Press, Amritsar. 1924. I.O.L.

Sind Publicity Committee. *Government Allegations against the Sikhs Refuted,* Sind. 1924. B.M.

XII. *Printed Books : English*

Azim Husain. *Fazl-i-Husain : A Political Biography,* Longman Green and Co. Bombay. 1946.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Bambford. P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, Second Edition, Dept. Publications, Delhi, 1974.

Barrier. N. Gerald, *The Sikhs and their Literature*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1970.

— — *Literature of Confrontation : An Introduction to Banned Publications on British Panjab*, published in the Indian Archives. January-June, 1972.

— — How to Rule India', in the *Panjab Past and Present*, October 1971.

— — The Panjab Disturbances of 1907 : The Response of the British Government in India to Agrarian Unrest', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. I, No.4.

— — *Panjab History in Printed British Documents* : A Bibliographic Guide to Parliamentary Papers and Select Non-serial Publications, 1843-1947, Missourie University, Columbia.

Bedi. Pyare Lal, *Harvest from the Desert : The Life and Works of Sir Ganga Ram*, Lahore, 1940.

Birdwood. Field Marshal. *Khaki and Gown : An Autobiography*, Ward Lock and Co., London, 1941.

Blumhardt, J.F., *Handlist of Panjabi Manuscripts*, in the India Office Library. London.

Colvin. Ian. *Life of General Dyer*, Blackwood and Sons. London, 1931.

Durlabh Singh, *The Valient Fighter*, Lahore, 1942

Dyer. R.E.H., Brig-Gen., *Disturbances in the Panjab*, London. 1920.

Fauja Singh, *A Guide to the Sikh Shrines and Historical Places in Delhi*, Delhi, 1963.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

— — *Kuka Movement*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1965.

— — (ed.), *Some Eminent Freedom Fighters of the Panjab*, Punjabi University, Paitala, 1972.

— — (ed.), *Who's Who of Freedom Movement in Panjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972.

Ganda Singh, *A Bibliography of the Panjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1966.

— — *'Guru Gobind Singh's Death at Nanded : An Examnination of Succession Theories*, Faridkot, 1972.

— — 'Guru Nank's Impact on History' in *Guru Nanak*, Publications Division of the Government of India, New Delhi, 1969.

— — (ed.), *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1965.

— — (ed.), *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1965.

Gopal, S., *Jawaharlal Nehru : A Biography*, Vol. I : 1889-1947, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1976.

— — (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. I, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1972.

Gulati, K.C., *Akalis : Past and Present*, Ashajanak Publications, Delhi, 1974.

Joshi, V.C. (ed.), *Autobiographical Writings of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Delhi, 1965.

Kharak Singh Abhinandan Granth, Prem Singh Sodhbans (ed.) Abhinandan Granth Committee, New Delhi, 1953.

Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadr, 1915 : India's First Armed Rebellion*, New Delhi, 1965.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Malhotra S.L., *Gandhi and Panjab*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1971.

— — *Gandhi : An Experiment in Communal Politics* Panajab University, Chandigarh 1974.

Minto. Lady (Countess of India), *India : Minto and Morley*, 1905-10, Macmillan, London, 1934.

Mittal. S.C., *Freedom Movement in Panjab*, Concept Publishers, Delhi. 1977.

Mohinder Singh. *The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect*. Atlantic Publishers. 1988

— — Baba Kharak Singh and India's Struggle for Freedom, National Institute of Panjab Studies, 1993

Nehru. Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1962.

O'Dwyer. Michael. *India As I Knew It* (1885-1925), Constable and Co., Ltd., London. 1925.

Sahni. Ruchi Ram. *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*

Dr. Ganda Singh. (ed.), S.G.P.C., Amritsar. 1965.

Sardul Singh Caveeshar. *Sikh Studies*, National Publications, Lahore, 1937.

— — *India's Fight for Freedom*, National Publications, Lahore. 1936.

— — *Lahore Fort Torture Camp*, Hero Publications, Lahore, 1946.

Satya Rai. *Evolution of Heroic Tradition in the Modern Panjab*, Punjabi University. Patiala. 1978.

Sethi. G.R.. *Sikh Struggle for Gurdwara Reform*, Union Press, Amritsar.1927.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Sikh League, *Resolutions of the Sikh League*, Lahore, at the British Museum, Reading Room.

Singh. G.B. (of Nabha), *Morcha of Nabha : An Appeal to All India Leaders.*

Sundram. G.A., *Guru-ka-Bagh Satyagraha*, The Swadeshi-mitram press. Madras, 1923.

Teja singh and Ganda Singh. *Short History of the Sikhs*, Orient Longman. Bombay, 1950.

— — *Sikhism : Its Ideals and Institutions*, Longman, Bombay, 1937.

— — *Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, Desh Bhagat Yadgar Committee, Jullundur, 1922.

Voice of India on the Sikh Settlement, Director of Information Bureau, Simla. 1926.

Walia. Ramesh. *Parja Mandal Movement in the Patiala and East Panjab States Union*, Punjabi University. Patiala, 1972.

Zimand. S., *Living India*, Longman Green & Co., New York. 1928

XIII. *Printed Books : Panjabi*

Amar singh Vaid. *Nabhe di Khuni Karkhas*, Rajpura. 1950.

Avtar Singh Azad. *Qaidi Veer*, 1924.

Bhagat Singh (Advocate). *Sri Nankana Sahib de Puratan Hal*, Amritsar.

Ganda Singh, *Kukian Di Vithia*, Amritsar. 1944.

— — *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Patiala. 1962.

— — (ed.).. *Panjab* Vol. II of *Abhinandan Granth*, 1962.

— — *Des di Azadi lei Panjabian de Jatan* : Introduction to the Panjabi translation of Dr. Tara Chand's 'History of the Freedom Movement in India', published by the Languages Department, Patiala, 1965.

Gurbakhash Singh Shamsher, Jhabalia, *Shahidi Jiwan*, Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Nankana, 1938.

Gurcharan Singh, *Jiwan Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1970.

Gurcharan Singh Giani, *Ankhi Surma : Jiwan Master Tara Singh*, Sikh Literature Distribution, Delhi, 1950.

Gurcharan Singh Sahansra, *Ghadar Party da Itihas*, Desh Bhagat Yadgar Society, Jullundur, 1961.

Jagjit Singh, 'Singh Sabha Lehar Number' of the *Dukh Niwaran*, Tarn Taran, July 1941.

— — *Ghadr Party Lehar*, Tarn Taran, 1955.

Jaswant Singh, *Master Tara Singh: Jiwan, Sangarsh te Udesh*, Amritsar, 1972.

Kahan Singh (Bhai) of Nabha, *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh*, Languages Department, Patiala, 1960.

— — *Gurmat Martand*, Vol. II, Languares Department, Patiala.

Kartar Singh Gyani, *Babe-di-Ber Sialkot*, P.I.B., B.M., London.

Kartar Singh Jhabbar, *Akali Morche-te-Jhabbar* (an autobiographical account, Narain Singh (ed.), National Book Shop, Delhi, 1967.

— — *Saka Nankana Sahib, te dusre Gurdwarian da Hal*, Manuscript (No. G. 571) Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Mohan Singh Vaid, *Bhayanak Saka Nankana Sahib*, Tarn Taran, undated.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

— — *Akali Lehar*, (a dairy of events) October 1920-27.

Munsha Singh Dukhi, *Jiwan Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid*, Tarn Taran, 1939.

Nahar Singh Gyani, *Azadi dian Leharan*, Ludhiana, 1959.

Narain Singh, *Kujh Haad Biti, Kujh Jag Biti*, International Sikh Brotherhood, Delhi, 1966.

Niranjan Singh, *Jiwan Yatra Master Tara Singh*, Navyug Press, Delhi, 1968.

— — *Mera Jiwan* Vikas, Navyug Press, Delhi, 1972.

Partap Singh, Giani, *Gurdwara Sudhar : arthat Akali Lehar*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1951.

Randhir Singh, Bhai, Jail Chithian, Amritsar, undated.

Sadhu Singh, *Dharamsalan da Parbandh*, Tarn Taran, 1915.

S.G.P.C., *Dharmik Azadi lei Jaito vich ghol*, Amritsar, 1924.

Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian da Itihas*, Navyug Press, Delhi, 1972.

Sunder singh Makhsuspuri, Babbar, *Babbar Akali Lehar*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1961.

Tara Singh, Master, *Meri Yaad*, Sikh Religious Book Society, Amritsar, 1945.

Teja Singh, *Arsee*, (autobiography), Sikh Publishing House, Amritsar, 1952.

XIV. *Printed Books : Hindi*

Mishar, Shiv Narain, *Akali Darshan*, Kanpur, 1923..

Sanyal, Sachindra Nath, *Bandi Jiwan*, Amritsar, 1927.

Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchon ka Itihas*, Peoples Publishing House, Delhi, 1974.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Secondary Sources : English

Ahluwalia, M.M., *Kukas : The Freedom Fighters of the Panjab,* Allied Publishers, Private Ltd. New Delhi, 1965.

Archer, John Clark, *Sikhs: In Relation to Hindus, Moslems, Christians and Ahmadiyas,* Princeton, 1946.

Bipan Chandra, 'Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Nothern India', A paper read at a seminar at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and published in *Socialism in India,* B.R. Nanda, (ed.).

Bose, A.C., *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad,* 1905-1922.

Coatman, J., *India in 1925-26,* Government of India Publication, Calcutta. 1926.

Darbara Singh, *Indian Struggle,* Hero Publications, Lahore, 1944.

Darling, Malcolm, *The Panjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt,* Oxford University Press, 1928.

— — *Wisdom and Waste in Panjab Villages,* London, 1934.

Datta, V.N., *Jallianwala Bagh,* Lyall Book Depot, Ludhiana, 1969.

Deol, Gurdev Singh, *The Role of the Ghadr Party in the National Movement,* Sterling Publishers, Jullundur, 1969.

Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism,* Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1966.

Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India,* Macmillan and co., London, 1924.

Furneaux, Rupert, *Massacre at Amritsar,* George Allen and Unwin, London, 1963.

Ganda Singh, 'Golden Temple: Symbol of Piety and Heroism', Indian National Congress, *Souvenir,* Amritsar, 1956.

— — 'Panjab's Struggle for Freedom Through the Ages', *Advance,* Chandigarh, August, 1955.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

— — PEPSU: A Brief Historical Background, Patiala, 1951.

— — 'Development of Sikh Thought upto the End of the 18th Century', a Paper read at a Seminar held at the University of Delhi, 9-15 November, 1964.

Gosh, K.C., *The Roll of Honour,* Vidya Bharati, Calcutta, 1965.

Gulab Singh, *Under the Shadow of Gallows: Story of the Revolutionary,* Delhi, 1963.

Harbans Singh, *Sikh Political Parties,* Sikh Publishing House, New Delhi, 1948.

Horniman, B.G., *Amritsar and our Duty to India,* Fisher and Unwin, London, 1920.

Karunakaran, K.P., *Religion and Political Awakening in India,* Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut.

Leigh, M.S., *The Panjab and the War,* Government Printing Lahore, 1922.

Nanda and Joshi (ed.) *Studies in Modern Indian History,* No. 1, Delhi, 1972.

Narang, Gokal Chand, *Transformation of Sikhism,* Lahore, 1912.

Nayar, Baldev Raj, *Minority Politics in the Panjab,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1966.

Sangat Singh, *Freedom Movement in Delhi,* Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972.

Sen, S.P. (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography,* Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, 1974, Vols. I-IV.

Sharma, Sri Ram, *Panjab in Ferment,* S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1971.

Sirkar, S.C., *Bengal Renaissance and other Essays,* People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Syangal, Munalal, *The Patriot Prince*, Doaba Publishing House, Delhi, 1961.

Secondary Sources : Panjabi

Ashok, Shamsher Singh, *Panjab dian Lehran*, Niantpuri, 1954.

Aulakh, Jagjit Singh, *Ik Jiwan Ik Ithas: Jiwan Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala*.

Balwant Singh, *Na-milwartan*, Panth Sewak Press, Amritsar.

Daljit Singh, *Singh Sabha de Banni: Jiwan Bhai Ditt Singh*, Amritsar, 1951.

Ditt Singh, Gyani, Naqli Sikh Prabodh, Khalsa Press, Lahore.

Gurdit Singh, Baba, *Zinda Shahid*, Akal Press, Amritsar, 1922.

Karam Singh, *Sada te Angrezi Sarkar da Sambandh*, Amritsar, 1915.

Lachhman Singh (of Ghoga), *Meri Jiwan Katha*, Manuscript in the Panjab State Archives, Patiala.

Prithipal Singh Kapoor, *Jiwan Master Tara Singh: Itihasik Pakh Ton*, Jullundur, 1968.

Sohan Singh Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Index

Ajmal Khan, Hakim 53, 148
Akal Takhat 20-22, 70, 158 n25
Akali Jathas
- formation of 18-19
- recruitment to 93-4
- composition of 97-8
- numerical strength of 100-1
- proclaiming of 102-4

Akali Movement
- circumstances leading to launching of 5-17
- Government of India's policy towards 39-40
- Panjab Government's policy towards 41-2, 50-1
- change in official attitude towards 54-7
- Sikh States and 62-86
- Sikh princes' measures against 81-6
- leadership of 87-92
- nationalist press support to 91
- official measures against 103-4
- Babbar terrorist's contribution to 125
- Malcolm Hailey's policy of weakening 133-4
- nationalist leaders support to 135
- Sikh sacrifices in 137
- contribution to the freedom struggle 138-9
- Congress support to 139-40
- Mahatma Gandhi's attitude towards 75-7
- Jawaharlal Nehru and 140-1.206-12
- split in the leadership 142-3
- Sikh peasantry's role in 143-4
- Sikh soldiers and 146

Amar Singh Jhabbal 45
Amritsar
- foundation of 2-3, 158 n 25
- hartal in 12
- Chief Khalsa Diwan meet at 16
- agitation over Keys Affair 43-9
- Shahidi Jatha leaves 72

Andrews, Rev.C.F.
- visits Guru-ka-Bagh 53
- eyewitness account 147, 199-205
- biographical note 166-67 n 59

Arur Singh, Sarbrah of the Golden Temple 13-14

Babbar Akalis
- origin 113-16
- propaganda 116-18
- murder of British officials and their henchmen 118-21
- official measures against 121-2
- arrests and hangings 124

Babe-de-Ber, Gurdwara 19-20
Balak Singh, Baba 6
Banke Dayal 10
Basant Dass, Mahant 28
Bhag Singh, Vakil 48
Bhagat Singh, Bhai 4
Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala 22,62,72
- measures against Akali Movement 81-6

Bijla Singh 83, 84
Bikram Singh, Bedi 154 n 48
Birdwood, General William 131-2 184 n 18
Birkenhead, Lord 111

Bose, A. C. 155 n 54
Bowring, J.W. 114

Caveeshar, see Sardul Singh Caveeshar
Central Sikh League 21, 35, 36, 90, 91
Chattar Singh Attariwala 154 n 48
Chief Khalsa Diwan 15-16, 21, 54
155 n 56, 156 n 5, 157 n 10
Congress, Indian National 41-2, 53, 58, 66, 74
Craik, H. D. 108

Dalip Singh, Martyr 31
Dan Singh 44, 48
Dass, C.R. 74
Dina Nath, Pandit 72
Ditt Singh, Bhai 7
Duleep Singh, Maharaja 67, 154 n 48
Dunnett, J.M. 50, 52, 60, 195
Dyer, Brigadier General R.E.H. 13-14, 145

Fauja Singh 151 n 2, 152 n 9, 153 n 29-32
Fazl-i-Husain, Mian 181 n 102

Ganda Singh, 97, 151 n 4, 152 n 8, 28, 153 n 29, 33, 154 n 48, 161 n 47 167 n 74
Ganda Singh Mahant 19
Gandhi, Mahatma
condemns Ghadrites 11
visits Nankana Sahib 35-6, 163 n 98,100
supports Akali Movement 42
sympathy with Jaito martyrs 74
withdraws support to Akali Movement 75-7
Ganga Ram, Sir 58-9
Ghadr Party 11, 144, 155, n 54-55
Gidwani, A.T. 73, 75
Gokhale, Gopal Krishan 9
Golden Temple
General Dyer honoured at 13-14
management of 15
reform of 19-23
agitation over the keys of 43-9
Gurcharan Singh, Mahant 19
Gurdwaras
origin 1-2, 151 n 1
early management 3-4
control of Mahants 5-6
corruptions in 5
early efforts for reform in 16-18
see for various gurdwaras under their respective names
Gurdwara legislation
see Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill
Gurmukh Singh, 7
Gursharan Singh, 169 n 2
Guru-ka-Bagh
beginning of struggle 49-50
Jathas march to 51
stoppage of supplies to 51-2
police beatings at 52-3
national leaders at 53
Panjab Governor visits 54
change in policy towards 55-6
Millitary pensioners' court arrest at 57
Congress support to 58
stoppage of arrests at 59
unconditional release of prisoners 60-1

Hailey, W. Malcolm
policy of weakening Akali Movement 77
declaration in Panjab Legislative Council regarding Nabha affair 78-9
address in Legislative Council over passage of Gurdwara Bill 109
creates division in Akali leadership 109-11, 142-3
Harbans Singh Attari 34, 162 n 91
Harchand Singh Lyallpuri 16, 156 n 6
Harkishan Singh, Bawa, 62, 112
Harnam Singh, Mahant 19
Harnam Singh, Zaildar 164 n 13
Herbert, H.A.32
Hira Singh Dard 158 n 19

Inder Singh, Akali 69, 172 n 57

Jaito (Morcha)
holding of Diwan 69
interruption of Akhand Path 69-70
beginning of Morcha 70
Jathas proceed to 71-2
Shahidi jatha of 500 marches to 71-2
firing at Shahidi Jatha 72-3
nationalist sympathy and support to 74
enquiry into firing at 74-5
Zimand's eyewitness account about 75, 213-16

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Mahatma Gandhi's stand on 76-7
settlement of dispute over 78-9
holding of 101 Akhand Paths 79
Jallianwala Bagh tragedy 13-14
Jaswant Singh Jhabbal 31, 44-5
Jeffreys, R.C. 107
Jhabbar, see Kartar Singh, Jathedar
Jinnah, M.A. 77, 134-5
Jodh Singh, Bhai
meditates to solve Jaito problem 78
leads Jatha to complete 101
Akhand Paths at Jaito 79
advises Deputy Commissioner
against entry into Durbar Sahib 107
negotiates for Gurdwara Bill 131-2
Josh, *see* Sohan Singh

Kartar Singh Bedi, Baba 26, 28. 30. 114, 157, *n* 16
Kartar Singh Jhabbar, Jathedar
leads Jatha to Panja Sahib 24-5
plans seizure of Janam Asthan 30
forced to give up planned action 31
forces the Government to hand over the Nankana shrines to the reformers 34-5
Keys of the Toshakhana
Government takes over 43
Akali agitation over 43-4
arrests of the Akali leader 45-6 return of 46
unconditional release of Akalis arrested in connection with agitation over 46-7
Government's defeat in the agitation over 47-9
Gandhi's telegram on Akali victory over 47
Khalsa College 8, 9. 57
Kharak Singh, Baba
leads agitation over Keys 44
arrested in connection with Keys Affair 44
released unconditionally 45
gets back Keys 45-6
offers non-cooperation in court 47
elected President of the S.G.P.C.90
re-arrested and refuses to accept conditional release 111
released unconditionally 112
spirit of non - cooperation 141
leaves factional politics 143
brief life-sketch 177-8 n 18
Khilafat and the Akalis 53, 74
Khushwant Singh 155 n 54, 156 n 56
Kitchlew, Dr.Saif-ud-Din
arrested in Rowlatt agitation 12
visits Nankana Sahib 35
accompanies the Shahidi Jatha to Jaito 72-3
Kuka Movement 6-7, 152 n 28

Lachman Singh, Bhai
visits Tarn Taran 24-5
proceeds to Nankana 31
killed along with his jatha 32-3
brief life-sketch 159-60 n 46
Lajpat Rai, Lala 10, 35, 74

Maclagan, Sir Edward, Governor of Panjab 80, 189
Mahants 4-5, 15-18, 159 n 44
for various Mahants *see* under respective names
Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan,
visits Guru-ka-Bagh 58
condemns Jaito firing 74
negotiates for Gurdwara legislation 77-8, 134-5
Mangal Singh, Akali 91, 106, 111
Masands
origin of 2-3, 152 n 10
degeneration and abolition of 3
Maynard, John 29, 40-1 60, 105
Mehtab Singh 60, 112
Mohamad Ali, Maulana 74
Mohan Singh Vaid, Bhai 28, 158 n 25, 27
Mota Singh, Master 82, 83. 84
Motilal Nehru 74

Nabha affair, see under Ripudaman Singh and Jaito
Nahar Singh, Giani 181 n 103, 184 n 1
Namdhari Movement 5-6
Nanak Dev, Guru
establishes Gurdwaras 1
starts sangat and Pangat 1-2
advice to priests 3
Nankana
early management 27
Narain Das becomes Mahant of 27
evil practices of Narain Das 27-8

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

C.M. King visits 28-9
Akali plans to reform 30
Lachhman Singh visits Nankana 31
Mahant and his mercenaries kill Lachman Singh and other reformers 32-3
Panjab Governor and other officials visit 33-4
reformers take control of 34
nature of the tragedy of 34-5
Mahatma Gandhi visits 35-6
official responsibility for the tragedy of 36-41

Narain Das, Mahant
becomes Mahant of Nankana 27
prepares to kill reformers 28-31
kills Akali reformers 32-3
arrested along with hirelings 33
Government support to 37-8

Narain Singh 79

Nehru, Jawaharlal
arrest and trial at Nabha 140-1
draft statement 206-12

Nirankari Movement 5-6

Non-cooperation and the Akalis 26,36, 43, 44, 45, 48-9, 76, 89, 90, 99, 108, 138-42

O' Donnel 155 *n* 50

O' Dwyer Sir Michael 155 n 55, 156 n 61, 160 n 57

Ogilvie, G.D. 169 n 8, 171 n 22

O' Grady, 65

Panja Sahib, Gurdwara 23.4

Partap Singh, Giani 160 n 55

Puckle, F.H. 107, 108

Pyarelal Bedi 168 n 94

Raja Singh, 80

Rakabganj, Gurdwara 11, 16, 156 n 6, 179 n 35

Ram Singh, Baba 6-7, 135 n 29, 32

Ramesh Walia 169 n 2, 187 n 37

Ranjodh Singh, Risaldar 57

Rattan Singh Azad 108-9

Reading, Lord, Viceroy of India 33,39,65, 109

Ripudaman Singh, Maharaja of Nabha
occupies throne 63
forced to abdicate 63
Akali leaders take up issue of his restoration 64
public reaction to Maharaja's removal to Dehra Dun 65
nationalist leadership and press support to 66-7
S.G.P.C.takes up restoration issue 67-8
protest marches and Diwans in favour of 69-70
Mahatma Gandhi's stand towards 79-80
dropping of Nabha restoration 80
deportation and death 80-1

Rowlatt Bills agitation 12-13

Ruchi Ram Sahni 50, 159 *n* 38

Sadhu Ram, Mahant 27

Sahni, see Ruchi Ram

Samundri, see Teja Singh

Sardul Singh Caveeshar 31, 82, 156 n 6

Satyapal, Dr. 12

Satya Rai 183 n 47

Sewa Singh Thikriwala 84-5

Shardanand, Swami 53, 166 n 56

Shaukat Ali, Maulana 35, 74

Sher Singh, Giani 112

Shromani Akali Dal
formation 92-5
composition 100-1
declared unlawful 104
arrests of leaders of 105
conditions on the release of members 110-11
divisions in leadership of 112

Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.)
formation of 87-8
demand of suitable Gurdwara legislation by 89
threat of non-cooperation by 89
election of new 90
domination of extremist and non-cooperators in 90-1
nationalist press and 91
acquisition of intrests in The Nation by 92
growing power and prestige of 98-9, 102
declared unlawful 104
mass arrest of leadership of 105-7
Government starts dialogue with 109

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

election of new 109
conditions on the release of members of 110-11
divisions among leadership of 111-12
exclusive control over Gurdwaras by 138
Congress support to 139-40
Non-cooperation and S.G.P.C. 141-42
political agitations launched by 150
Sikh League, see Central Sikh League
Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill
official anxiety to introduce 127-8
introduction in Legislative Council 128
lapse of first 128
introduction of second 129
Panjab Government drops 130
Birdwood Committee's efforts to legislate 131-2
passage of final 135-6
split in the Akali leadership over acceptance of 109-12
Singh Sabha Movement 7-10
Sohan Singh Josh 50, 143, 125 n 54 156 n 66
Sunder Das, Mahant 50-1
Sunder Singh Majithia 88, 177 n 8
Sunder Singh, Master 31, 48, 91
Sunder Singh Ramgarhia 43

Tara Singh, Master visits Nankana 31
arrested in connection with Keys agitation 45
meets Maharaja of Nabha 64
creates strong public opinion in favour of Nabha 67
refuses conditional release 111
released unconditionally 112
captures power in Akali politics 143
brief life-sketch 185 n 11
Tara Singh, M.L.C. (of Moga)
introduces Sikh Gurdwara and shrines Bill 135
statement on Akali sufferings 184 n 1
Tarn Taran, Gurdwara
Sikh leaders persuade Mahant to improve his ways 24
visit of Bhai Lachman Singh and his Jatha 24
clash between Mahants and reformers 25
Akali control over 25
Teja Singh, Prof. 50, 152 n 11, 19
Teja Singh Samundri 16, 54, 111

Udasis, origin of 152 n 20
Uttam Singh Bhai 31, 33

Verges, Capt. A.L. 53, 148, 168 n 86
Vir Singh, Bhai 7

Wilson-Johnston 72, 78, 172 n 52 173 n 59
Zora Singh, Nazim 172 n 57
Zimand, S.
accompanies Shahidi Jatha at Jaito 72
eyewitness account on Jaito firing 72-3, 213-16

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com